

Chronicles

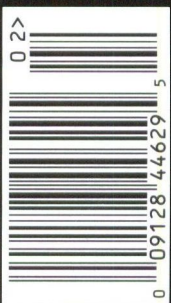
February 2010

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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BRINGING AMERICA HOME

How America Lost Her Way and
How We Can Find Our Way Back

by Tom Pauken

How did the Bush administration squander the political capital that Goldwater-Reagan conservatives took more than three decades to build?

How did America go from having the strongest economy in the world to facing our most serious economic crisis since the Great Depression?

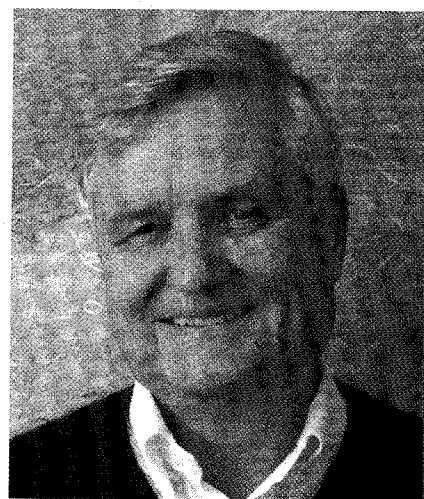
What became of an American culture that once was guided by the principles of Christianity?

Bringing America Home not only explains how we lost our way, but shows how our founding principles can help us find our way back.

A native Texan, veteran of the Nixon and Reagan administrations, and former state chairman of the Texas Republican Party, Tom Pauken is the author of *The Thirty Years War: The Politics of the Sixties Generation*.

He holds a bachelor's degree from Georgetown University and a law degree from Southern Methodist University.

He currently serves as chairman of the Texas Workforce Commission.



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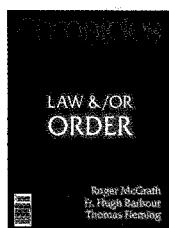
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Enough Is Enough

Taki Theodoracopulos's nondefense defense of Roman Polanski ("The Limits of Compassion," *Under the Black Flag*, December 2009) reads like the deluded ramblings of a washed-up *bon vivant* who desperately needs to be back in the good graces of the popular but poor soul who drugged and anally raped a 13-year-old girl. Did the early tragedies in Mr. Polanski's life give him license to drug and then sodomize a 13-year-old? Was his life so awful afterward that he should be excused? Does Mr. Theodoracopulos feel that living in Europe and making medio-

cre movies is just punishment?

Mr. Theodoracopulos's compassion for Polanski and his apparent irrational disdain for Jews and the Irish are troubling. What do the crimes of one have to do with the crimes of the others? If Mr. Polanski goes free, does Mr. Theodoracopulos believe that the victims of the INLA are somehow compensated? Will the IRA's debts to God, for their sins, be repaid by allowing a rapist of children to go free? Where did Mr. Theodoracopulos come up with this evil accounting system?

—Michael Shockley
Elk Rapids, MI

Mr. Theodoracopulos Replies:

Michael Shockley does not appear to have understood what I wrote. I severed relations with Polanski after he committed his crime and wrote some pretty heavy things about him. But after 30-some odd years, I feel—as does the victim—that enough is enough.

And as far as being a washed-up *bon vivant*, at least I've had and continue to have fun, and I also get to write and say anything that pleases me. You're showing envy, Shockley, one of the deadly sins.



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Bad Whitey 101, Second Semester

by R. Cort Kirkwood

THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA'S College of Education and Human Development has declared that all prospective teachers must be taught that some teachers are too white, too rich, too privileged, and too oppressive.

This announcement recalls the shenanigans at the University of Delaware, reported in these pages last year. The students there were being taught that all whites are racist and that nonwhites cannot be racist. They also learned that reverse racism is "a term created and used by white people to deny their white privilege," while "non-racist" is a

non-term . . . created by whites to deny responsibility for systemic racism, to maintain an aura of innocence in the face of racial oppression, and to shift responsibility for that oppression from whites to people of color (called "blaming the victim").

Patrons of the university learned that Delaware is a nonschool where nonteachers impart a noneducation to nonstudents, and if the efforts of Minnesota's "Teacher Education Redesign Initiative," crafted by its Race, Culture, Class, and Gender Task Group, are any indication, that university is another academic nonentity as well.

The initiative's working paper, submitted last July, begins with quotations "that voice the expressions of others in order to emphasize the real experiences of how cultural diversity lives and breathes in classrooms today." One vignette imparts the sad tale of a teacher who used red pen to correct papers, unaware "that Koreans, particularly those who are Buddhists, only write a person's name in red

at the time of death or at the anniversary of a death. Therefore, to see the names of their children in red terrified the Korean parents."

Teachers, the working paper says, must demonstrate "cultural competence" by attaining "outcomes" in the following areas: "(1) Self; (2) Self and Others; (3) Self and Schools; and (4) Self and Society."

Teachers who achieve the right outcome on "Self" "will be able to discuss their own histories and . . . white privilege, hegemonic masculinity, heteronormativity, and internalized oppression." Teachers "will recognize & demonstrate understanding of white privilege" and "understand the importance of cultural identity and develop a positive sense of racial/cultural identity."

Regarding "Self and Others," new teachers must "demonstrate the capability for consciousness and awareness of actively monitoring one's behaviors, cultural assumptions, and knowledge around cross-cultural interactions." And to demonstrate they have achieved the right outcome on "Self and Schools," they must be able to "explain how institutional racism works in schools."

Eventually, the paper gets to the heart of what a great teacher really is:

Our future teachers will be able to construct and articulate a sophisticated and nuanced critical analysis of this story of America, for what it illuminates and what it hides or distorts. In pursuing this analysis, students will make use of, among other concepts and theories, the following: myth of meritocracy in the United States; historical connections between

scientific racism, intelligence testing, and assumptions of fixed mental capacity; alternative explanations for mobility (and lack of it); history of demands for assimilation to white, middle-class, Christian meanings and values; history of white racism, with special focus on current colorblind ideology.

Lest you think this is just a small part of what Minnesota's pedagogues want to accomplish, the paper flatly says the outcomes are "an overarching framework from which beginning teachers frame the rest of teacher education courses and practice." In short, brainwashing teachers is a goal of Minnesota's College of Education and Human Development.

U.S. taxpayers and generous alumni, mostly white and "privileged," can see once again how leftist elites are using the schools they pay for to destroy their children and make war on American culture. Of course, it was "heteronormative" racists of "hegemonic masculinity" who founded the University of Minnesota and other schools where leftist elites now teach students (and faculty) of all colors to hate whites.

But just like the shenanigans at the University of Delaware, Minnesota's race initiative is concerned more with undermining "white, middle-class" *religion* than with hating whitey. For leftists, "Christian meanings and values" are the part of the American identity most in need of a "redesign."

Maybe the school's wealthier alumni should redesign their list of charitable causes to exclude their *alma mater*. ♦

Swiss Minarets

SWISS VOTERS APPROVED a constitutional amendment banning the construction of new minarets last November, to the howls of *bien-pensant* rage at home and abroad. The proposal was supported by 57.5 percent of the participating voters and 22 of the 26 Swiss cantons. It was originally drafted in May 2007 by a group of conservative politicians, known as the Egerkingen Committee, after the federal supreme court overrode the objections of the local community and approved the construction of a minaret by the Turkish Cultural Association in the northern town Wangen bei Olten.

The ensuing campaign by the Swiss People's Party (SVP) at the local level against the erection of new minarets was blocked by cantonal authorities who claimed that the demands were unconstitutional. A federal popular initiative was launched instead; such initiatives, which require at least 100,000 signatures, are not subject to judicial review. The Egerkingen Committee argued that the construction of a minaret has no religious meaning: "Neither in the Qur'an nor in any other holy scripture of Islam is the minaret expressly mentioned. It is more a symbol of [a] religious-political power claim." The initiators quoted an eminent Islamist, current Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who declared in a 1997 speech that "mosques are our barracks, domes our helmets, minarets our bayonets, believers our soldiers—and this holy army guards my religion."

The Swiss elite class was indignant. The government opposed the initiative from the outset because it supposedly violates human rights and contradicts the alleged "core values" of the Swiss constitution. The Federal Assembly voted 129 to 50 last spring to recommend to Swiss voters that they vote "no." The local Amnes-

ty International chairman said the minaret ban "aims to exploit fears of Muslims and encourage xenophobia." Business associations expressed fears for Swiss commercial interests abroad. A statement from the Swiss Catholic Bishops Conference claimed the ban would "hinder interreligious dialogue" and added, somewhat lamely, that the construction of minarets was already regulated by Swiss building codes. The Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches repeated similar platitudes. The president of the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities, Dr. Herbert Winter, recalled the dark days when "we were not allowed to construct synagogues or cupola roofs."

The reaction in the Muslim world was predictable and uninteresting. The Europeans' reaction, just as predictable, contained the alarming hint that a judicial annulment of the decision was desirable and probably inevitable. French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said the ban amounted to religious oppression and expressed hope that the Swiss would reverse the decision. Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt said the result was a sign of prejudice and questioned why such a decision was put to a referendum in the first place.

Legal experts opposing the ban claim that the narrowly aimed language of the referendum question violated the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights, and Switzerland is party to both. They place special hopes in Article 9 of the European Convention, which says, "Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others." The first complaint to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg was filed by Algerian-born

Hafid Ouairi, the former spokesman for the Geneva mosque, who says he is acting on behalf of all Swiss who feel the way he does about the decision.

Ulrich Schluer, the SVP deputy who led the ban campaign, points out that the European Court had recently ruled against permitting crucifixes in classrooms of Italian schools. "It now appears that Christian towns are not supposed to use Christian symbols," he said. "But we are supposed to have Muslim symbols." The SVP insists that allowing the Strasbourg court to overturn the referendum result would breach the popular sovereignty that underpins Swiss democratic institutions and tradition.

The upholders of diversity, tolerance, etc., will not be impressed by "institutions" and "tradition." They want each European nation to adopt, or at least to accept, a vote of no confidence in itself. They will probably succeed in having a panel of judges—recruited from the same stratum as themselves, and sharing the same pathologies—declare the Swiss vote illegal. But that is not important. What matters is that the gap between them and the people will continue to grow wider by the day, from Denmark to Italy, from Holland to Austria. The underground dialogue on the true nature of Islam, and the threat it presents to Europe's nations and societies, is the only dialogue there is. It can no longer be stifled by judicial fiat, even if the Swiss vote is abrogated, and even if Geert Wilders is sent to jail after his forthcoming trial in Amsterdam.

—Srdja Trifkovic

Mommy's Eco-Scold

THE SCENE OPENS with children at a playground, laughing and yelling as they swing and jump rope. The camera zooms in on a dark-haired little girl, seven or eight years old, running her finger

through a dirty puddle. Suddenly, thunder tears through the sky, and a downpour sends the children screaming home. Later that night, the girl watches TV, where she sees newsreels of melting snow, rushing floods, and weeping refugees. She goes to bed, but her sleep is disturbed by a nightmare. She is in a desert. The earth cracks beneath her, and she runs from the gaping chasms, only to meet huge waves. Her screaming awakens her father. The next scene shows them at a computer looking up a website. The little girl sees something on-screen that inspires her, and she grabs her father's camcorder, runs up several flights of stairs to the roof of her apartment building, and stretches out her little arms to focus her dad's camera on her face. Her bright, dark eyes peer intently into the lens. "Please help the world," she lisps.

No, this is not a video shown to a group of second graders on Earth Day. It was part of the opening ceremonies at the United Nation's Climate Change Conference, held in Copenhagen last December—an event chock full of supposedly educated, intelligent, informed dignitar-

ies. The message is clear: Give us control of your carbon emissions, you selfish hedonist, or your children will die awful deaths in a world ruined by your Land Rover.

Such manipulation is typical of the climate-change movement, which both targets children and uses them to target adults. On NPR's December 16 *Morning Edition*, one of the subjects was Popular Elementary in South London, where an organization called Eco-Schools is catechizing children in the religion of global disaster. "Use the glass light, turn off radiators before opening windows," the children chant. The school makes use of ten-year-old "eco reps," who serve on the school's "eco council." A boy tells the reporter, "The eco reps make sure that everybody's saving the electricity, saving energy. And we have different monitors in our class." The show's host asks the London correspondent what the adults in Britain think about recycling and other eco-friendly practices. Well, he admits, it's hard to teach an old dog new tricks. When he drinks a beer, his brain grinds away with "must put beer in recycling

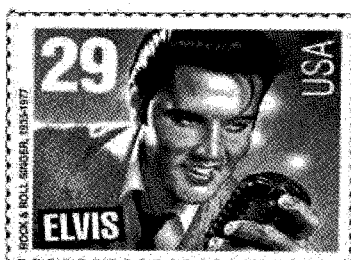
bin." For these children, recycling beer bottles will be automatic.

In the United States, children aren't just spying on one another but keeping an eye on their parents as well, reported the *New York Times* on October 9. Jennifer Ross of Dobbs Ferry, New York, tells the *Times* that her children outdo her in their efforts to save the earth. They consider her bath at night "a wasteful indulgence." They are upset with her when she forgets the reusable shopping bags. They nag her about buying a hybrid car. "Kids have really turned into the little conscience sitting in the back seat," said Julia Bovey of the Natural Resources Defense Council. "Here's this information about how we can help the environment, and kids are not able to rationalize it away the way that adults do." A more honest explanation of what's at work might be that children will believe anything their teachers tell them, so environmentalists take advantage of their trust.

When I was a child, my mother forbade me to watch the cartoon *Captain Planet*. I did anyway when she had her back turned. I remember one episode in which one of the "Planeteers" said he wanted a large family. The other Planeteers warned him that he was committing a crime against the already overpopulated earth. The young man merely laughed, but then he had a dream of visiting an alien land drastically overrun by a race of talking rats. When he awoke, the planet-killer had come around. He announced that he would be limiting his family size to one, maybe two children.

My mother knew how propaganda works: If you want to get your message across, target the kids. Bombard their unformed little brains with images and slogans galore, with Going Green and Eating Organic and Driving a Prius, until they become perfect little Huxleyans. While you're at it, get them to harass their wasteful parents, who seem to believe that the opinions their children absorb carry

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more weight than their own. And to top it all off, use emotion-laden imagery of suffering children in advertisements and campaigns and at U.N. conferences. Apparently adults have rather childlike intellects themselves these days.

—Nicole M. Kooistra

Greece on the Skids

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS is on the minds of everyone in Greece, and James Carville's "It's the economy, stupid" is on the lips of many Greek politicians. The Hellenic economy is collapsing, and the huge and counterproductive public sector has failed to generate growth, produce wealth, and diffuse it to the people.

The major European papers reported that Greece has gone bankrupt, forcing the government in Athens to borrow at high interest rates. In reality, what happened was that the Greek budget deficit skyrocketed to 12.7 percent of GDP. After a decade of bludgeoning the people with high interest rates, the banking sector now seems intimidated; 20 billion euros are gone and will not be coming back. Businesses are failing; people are losing their jobs. Blue-collar workers are now almost exclusively foreign immigrants. The state cannot assist anyone. No one speaks about development anymore, since that would sound like a cruel joke. And 90 percent of the state's income ends up covering expenses and foreign debt. (That amounts to 113 percent of GNP.)

Unemployment is expected to rise to 12 percent, while the government continues to sack state employees and raises taxes. (They call it "taxation reform.") At the same time, Athens is planning to naturalize more than half a million immigrants (most of them African and Asian). And in a few weeks the European Commission will be on hand to check on the government's budget! This is a reminder of

Greece's "commitment" to the European Union and the eurozone. It's enough to make some of us nostalgic for our beloved drachma.

Somehow, the Obama fans who now rule Greece managed to persuade people that the economy should be our number-one priority. Money, money, money—not blood and soil.

The materialists have won.

There are a few of us left in the ancient land called Hellas who actually think that the economic crisis is a byproduct of a profound moral crisis. It is the result of immoral and unethical decisions—decisions favoring the rich, decisions that disregard our values, decisions that are transforming men into consumers, decisions that deviate from our traditions.

As in the United States, immoderation is the rule in Greece. It's difficult to resist, when nothing stands in its way—no religion, no values, no history, no future. In Greece, we forgot everything about our glorious past. We sacrificed it for comfort and pleasure; we borrowed and spent without remorse. And now it's payback time.

—Nikos Hidioglou

Redesigned

READERS WILL NOTICE a few changes in the format of the February number. This is the first major overhaul since I became editor in 1985, and even a reader as visually impaired as the editor will note the larger and clearer type, the more balanced layout, and—if I may rhapsodize—the sense of spaciousness. None of the changes is in itself radical: The typeface is only a clearer and simpler cousin of our previous font, and we have avoided most of the more recent design clichés that make it easy to confuse many magazines with advertising circulars or websites.

I am grateful to our friend and con-

tributor **Gregory McNamee** and **Carole Thickstun** for making it possible to carry out a thoroughgoing change in a comparatively short time and to Scott Richert and Aaron Wolf for the endless and painstaking adjustments that translated a beautiful concept into a working template. If you have compliments to make, we'd be delighted to hear them.

—Thomas Fleming

Obiter Dicta

Our poet this month is **Maryann Corbett**, the author of two chapbooks, *Dissonance* (Scienter Press, forthcoming) and *Gardening in a Time of War* (Pudding House, 2007). She is the co-winner of the 2009 Willis Barnstone Translation Prize. Her poems, essays, and translations have appeared or are forthcoming in *River Styx*, *Atlanta Review*, *The Evansville Review*, *Water-Stone Review*, and other journals in print and online. She lives in St. Paul and works for the Minnesota legislature.

The artwork on page 12 is by **Shawn Kelley**, a freelance designer, modern-day printmaker, and entrepreneur. He recently started *WallBlank.com* as a way to help people find great, affordable artwork while helping artists make money. He lives in Rockford, Illinois, with his wife and two children. Photo of Jesse James courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-3855.

The sketch on page 15 is by **E.W. Kemble**, 1887. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-134752.

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Our cover graphic is provided by **Sandy Faulkner**. A native of Weiner, Arkansas, Mr. Faulkner is a taxidermist specializing in squirrels and loons.



Print the Legend

IT WAS ABOUT 3 P.M. on October 26, 1881, as Tombstone's town marshal, Virgil Earp (also a deputy U.S. marshal), his brothers Wyatt and Morgan, and the Earps' eccentric friend Dr. John H. Holliday confronted Isaac and William Clanton and Thomas and Robert Findley McLaury near the O.K. Corral. After 30 seconds of firing, Morgan Earp lay badly wounded, Holliday and Virgil had sustained less serious wounds, while Billy Clanton and the McLaury were dead or dying. Only Wyatt and Ike Clanton—who had fled the scene unarmed—were unscathed.

Witnesses to the gunfight said that Billy and Wyatt drew more or less simultaneously, though Wyatt would later claim that he drew only when he saw Billy reaching for his gun. Rather than shoot Billy, however, Wyatt went for the best gun in the bunch—Robert (known as Frank) McLaury—and shot him in the stomach. The wounded McLaury took aim at Doc Holliday, crying out, "I've got you now." Raising his gun, Doc grimly quipped, "Blaze away: You're a daisy if you do," but Frank shot Holliday in the hip before being hit again by a wounded Morgan Earp.

The details, which have been debated by the Earps' defenders and detractors for over a century and a quarter, are a little sketchy, and, for the sake of avoiding the controversy, I have mostly followed Casey Tefertiller's painstaking and judicious reconstruction. Most of us who are not experts on the Old West and do not have a dog in this famous fight will probably still see the events as the morality play in black and white that has been told and retold in fiction and movies. The noble Earps—all good Republicans—were on the side of law and order. They were virtuous men who did not drink liquor or indulge in the vices that were on gaudy display in the Old West. The lives of these gallant officers of the law had been repeatedly threatened by a gang of rustlers, stagecoach robbers, and murderers, but when the time came, the fearless Earps, quick on the draw, showed their mettle.

This, or something very like it, was the story I grew

up believing. It was enshrined in one of the classics of frontier literature, Stuart N. Lake's *Wyatt Earp: Frontier Marshal*, a book I read more than once as a boy.

The Earps were unquestionably tough men who inspired respect from many, envy from some, but very little affection. Perhaps it was the steely glaze of their cold blue eyes, or perhaps it was the fact that they were continually on the make, willing to make money by almost any means that did not involve working with their hands. At the preliminary hearing held for the killing of the Clantons and McLaury, Wyatt, making a bid for social inflation, listed his occupation as saloonkeeper. While he did tend bar from time to time, he was in tawdry reality a professional gambler who ran the faro table at the Oriental Saloon.

The aftermath of the O.K. Corral fight—which took place on the street, not in the corral—was even bloodier than the fight itself. Ike Clanton, backed by Sheriff John Behan, filed murder charges against the Earps and Doc Holliday, though only Wyatt and Doc had to undergo a hearing. The mood in Tombstone and around the country quickly shifted from a celebration of the Earps' courage to condemnation of their murders, as the killings were now described. Ike Clanton's confused and contradictory testimony, however, undercut the prosecution's case. But Ike's stupidity and prevarication do not necessarily exculpate the Earps.

It is true that Virgil and Wyatt were peace officers who had a right to disarm the Clantons, but anyone with a drop of common sense knew that blood would flow if the two groups met on the street. Ike Clanton had been in Tombstone, getting drunk and bad-mouthing and threatening the Earps. But—and this is how bizarre things were—not long afterward Virgil, Ike Clanton, Tom McLaury, and Johnny Behan had stayed up all night playing poker. During the game an altercation broke out between Ike and Virgil, who ended up beating Ike with his gun. Taken into custody, Ike threatened the Earps, and Morgan offered to pay his fine—if Ike would face him with a gun. Like Ike, Morgan always had a big mouth. Later, about one in the afternoon, Wyatt ran into Tom McLaury on the street. By this time, Wyatt was out for blood.

"Are you heeled?" Wyatt snarled at McLaury.

Tom told him politely that he was a friend of Wyatt's and held no grudge, but "If you want to make a fight, I'll make a fight with you anywhere."

"All right, make a fight," was Wyatt's answer as he crashed his pistol into Tom McLaury's skull. It seems clear that the usually clearheaded and cool-tempered Wyatt—who had probably never killed a man and pre-

ferred to get the drop on a troublemaker by coming up behind him in an alley with a shotgun—had made up his mind. Ike Clanton had shot off his mouth once too often, and it was time to kill the Clantons and any friends who stood by them before they killed the Earps. This was the Code of the West: If a man threatened to kill you, he was fair game for any kind of attack.

Even after the hearings, the fight was not over. In late December, Virgil was shotgunned by three men in the street. Ike Clanton's hat was found nearby, and his friend Frank Stilwell was spotted. Wyatt drew the obvious conclusions—though they would not have amounted to much in a court of law. By the end of January, while Virgil was still in a serious condition, Morgan Earp was pretty well recovered. Though warned of trouble, he insisted on having a night on the town, going to the theater and then to the pool hall, where he was shot through the window as he bent over to make a shot. People said the shooter was Frank Stilwell. When Wyatt caught up with him, Stilwell and Ike appeared to be laying for Virgil Earp, who was being sent to California for his health. Wyatt, as he mockingly recounted, killed Stilwell “helpless and trembling for his life.”

The killings did not stop until Earp and Holliday came across “Curly Bill” Brocius, one of Clanton's Cowboys, in March 1884. Brocius narrowly missed Wyatt, who gunned him down with a shotgun blast. Was Wyatt an avenger or a cold-blooded killer? Curly Bill, a murderer or a murder victim?

By the standards of civilized life, both sides were guilty of cold-blooded, premeditated murder in the first degree, but, if we look at it from the killers' perspectives, we should probably conclude that they all had reasons that amounted to justification according to the Code. The Clantons would say with some justice that the Earps had provoked a quarrel with the Clantons and McLaurys and then, with their homicidal dentist friend, gunned them down in the street. By the laws of vendetta, the Earps deserved to die—not in a fair fight, as in an affair of honor, but executed without mercy or a chance to resist. The Earps, on the other hand, though they would not have accepted the Cowboys' right to blood, applied the same argument to the men who had assassinated Morgan and tried to do the same to Virgil.

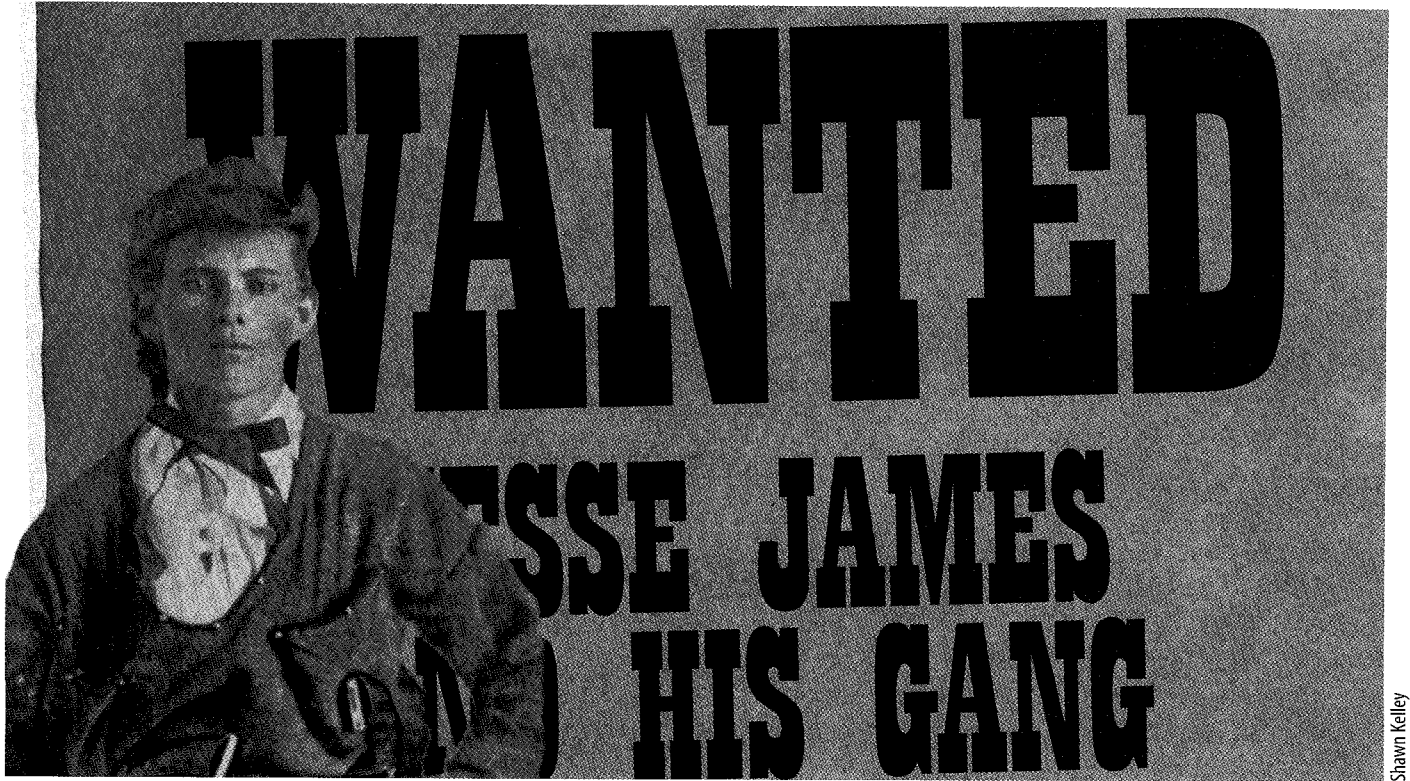
For all their homicidal violence, neither the Earps nor the McLaurys were really gunmen, much less outlaws. They lived according to an ancient code that had withered in London and Boston but sprang back to life on the frontier. Gun battles and lynch mobs were as much a part of the can-do American mentality as quilting bees and barn raisings.

Some events pass into legend because they typify a way of life, a time and a place—Cato's suicide at Utica; Travis, Crockett, and Bowie's stand at the Alamo; Walter Raleigh spreading his cloak over a puddle for the Virgin Queen. But the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral has been mythologized, not because it was a typical event on the frontier, but because it was so unusual—perhaps unique—for so

By the standards of civilized life, both sides were guilty of cold-blooded murder, but, if we look at it from the killers' perspectives, they all had reasons that amounted to justification according to the Code of the West.

many men to shoot it out on the street. Perhaps it was its very uniqueness that made this shoot-out part of the American myth, but the treatment of the conflict also flattered the American sense of superiority. Here were bold Northern men, officers of the law, who put down a violent conspiracy of anarchic Southerners who did not appreciate the Glorious Union. Death be to all such men, whether they are Confederate rebels, Plains Indians, Filipinos, Nazi Krauts, or Ragheads who cannot be made to understand the advantages of U.S. occupation.

Christians have long debated the morality of war and the traditions of self-defense that lie behind dueling, vendettas, and vigilantism. What most of the debate assumes is a legitimate legal and social order that does its best to protect the innocent and punish the guilty. There are times, however, when there is either no order or the order is so corrupt that it protects criminals. This is the situation described in the Pentateuch and among the Germanic barbarians who destroyed the Roman order. It was also the condition under which the men and women of the frontier had to build their farms and ranches, mind their stores, and rear their children. Was Sheriff Behan really a credible peace officer? Could the McLaurys possibly have trusted Virgil Earp? Today, alas, these are the sort of questions that many Americans are asking themselves. If the law is without order, can there once again be an order that is without law? ♦



Shawn Kelley

The Great American Outlaw

by Roger D. McGrath

WHEN *PUBLIC ENEMIES* was making the rounds in theaters across America last summer, doing nearly \$100 million of business domestically, I was reminded that we Americans love our outlaws—not our criminals, mind you, but our outlaws. It is a distinction with a difference. Criminals prey on the weak and vulnerable, mug old men and snatch women's purses, commit despicable acts such as rape, and cower when brought to bay by lawmen. Outlaws target wealthy and powerful institutions, make daring escapes, and boldly take on all comers, be they the county sheriff and his deputies, metropolitan police, or J. Edgar Hoover and his FBI special agents. Criminals are regarded as scum. Outlaws are celebrated in song and story.

We have been guilty of romanticizing and even mythologizing outlaws, in part because of the violent birth of our nation. Our American rebels won; the law-abiding loyalists lost. But our love for outlaws goes back much further than that. A good number of colonists came from Britain's Celtic fringe—Cornwall, Wales, Scotland, and

especially Ireland—where outlaw traditions ran deep. An outlaw there wasn't taking from his fellow Celts but from a brutal occupier and the occupier's quislings. Even the English had their Robin Hood, a Saxon contesting with the Norman rulers. Then, too, there is something in human nature that simply loves the underdog taking on the establishment with nothing on his side but courage, intelligence, ingenuity, and spirit.

The American outlaw had his greatest days in the post-Civil War American West. Jesse James, Cole Younger, Black Bart, Sam Bass, Billy the Kid, Grat Dalton, Bill Doolin, Butch Cassidy, and dozens more became household names for their daring exploits. They robbed and they stole, but the money was from the bank, mining conglomerate, railroad, or express company. Since most Westerners had real or imagined grievances against such institutions, they rooted for the outlaws. By the time dime novelists and writers for Eastern magazines got through with the outlaws, they were romantic heroes of legendary

proportions. More than one teenage boy living in the East was inspired by these stories to leave home for the frontier West. Born in Mont Clare, a small village immediately northeast of Valley Forge in Pennsylvania, Harry Longabaugh was a voracious reader of outlaw tales. By the time he was 15 he had left home for Colorado. He found work there as a ranch hand but was soon in Wyoming, earning the nickname "Sundance Kid" and beginning a long outlaw career that eventually led him to Butch Cassidy and the Wild Bunch.

The Wild Bunch was the last of the famous outlaw gangs of the Old West. When Butch and Sundance left America for Argentina in 1901, the days of train robberies and long-distance horseback getaways and pursuits were over—at least in reality. With the departure of the real-life outlaws and the vanishing of the Old West came the reenactment of Western themes in a new form of entertainment: movies. The first Western—*The Great Train Robbery*, a 12-minute thriller directed by Edwin Porter—arrived on the silver screen in 1903. Audiences loved it and demanded more.

Silent Westerns were cranked out by the dozen, enabling viewers to time travel to the Old West and enjoy the derring-do of outlaws and lawmen. Outlaws were often portrayed in a sympathetic light, having gone to the wrong side because of some grave injustice suffered by them or their family. Many were shown foiling the evil plans of government officials and robber barons, taking from their ill-gotten wealth, and giving to the oppressed and exploited folk of the countryside. A common plot had the outlaw stopping at a farm to ask for a meal. With little enough herself, a widow provides him with a meal she hasn't dared to enjoy since better times. As the outlaw is paying for the fine repast he notices a tear on the widow's cheek and learns that the banker is on his way to foreclose on the farm. The outlaw provides the widow with the money required to pay the mortgage and departs in a whirl. The banker arrives, greedily surveying the property he is about to take title to. He is stunned to have the widow hand over the cash to pay off the mortgage. While driving his buggy back to town, the banker is waylaid by the outlaw and relieved of his lucre. The Great American Outlaw rocks!

While such a deed was attributed to several of the outlaws of the Old West, Jesse James was portrayed most often as our American Robin Hood. The first movie about him, *Jesse James Under the Black Flag*, was released in 1921. More ambitious was the 1927 big-budget Paramount picture *Jesse James*. Coinciding with the release of

the movie was the announcement by Kansas City lawyer John Newman that a monument would be erected in Jesse's honor. There were those who voiced opposition, but as one supporter put it, "The crimes with which he was charged, even if all true, are pale in comparison with those which society and posterity committed against him." Fred Thompson, the star of *Jesse James*, called Jesse

a strong, fearless man, without the trace of a mean trait. By the injustices that he suffered at the hands of his fellowmen he was driven from his hearth and home to become a hunted object outside the law—a hunted animal forced to prey upon others for his daily bread. . . . It was always the bullion hoarded by some carpetbagger that he and his boys were after. Never did they rob the poor and needy.

Several more movies about Jesse were to follow, including Twentieth Century-Fox's 1939 *Jesse James*, starring Tyrone Power as Jesse and Henry Fonda as Frank. In the meantime, though, the Great Depression was in full swing, and Americans had taken to the outlaw trail—for real—once again. For Wall Street the Depression began with the crash in the fall of 1929. But for those Americans on the farm and in small towns, especially in the Midwest and Southwest, the Depression began much earlier in the 20's, when prices for crops and livestock began a precipitous fall after the boom during World War I. Foreclosures became common in every agricultural and ranching region and put thousands on the road to California or to the big city. Farms were abandoned, and many a small town lost half or more of its population—all while the financial titans of New York, the major banks, and the industrialists seemed to be thriving. The environment was ripe for a reemergence of the Great American Outlaw. He now made his escapes in a V-8 Ford rather than on a horse, but he was back.

JUST AS PUBLIC ENEMIES focuses principally on John Dillinger, so did the public's attention in the early to mid 30's. Dillinger wasn't exactly a good boy gone bad, but he had suffered certain injustices. Born in Indianapolis in 1903, he was not quite four years old when his mother died. The loss left him hurt and bewildered. He grew up rebellious and quit school at 13 to work in a machine shop. He worked hard at his job during the day but caroused at night, frequently ending the evening drunk and fighting. After a brief stint in the Navy and a marriage to

16-year-old Beryl Hovius, he and an older friend, whose influence he had fallen under, robbed a grocery store. They were arrested the next day. Dillinger's father convinced his son to come clean and plead guilty. Dillinger dutifully confessed but nonetheless received a sentence of 10-20 years in prison. His father was stunned and pleaded with the judge to reduce the time. No luck. Once in prison Dillinger declared, "I will be the meanest bastard you ever saw when I get out of here."

We have been guilty of romanticizing and even mythologizing outlaws, in part because of the violent birth of our nation. Our American rebels won; the law-abiding loyalists lost.

After serving nearly nine years, Dillinger was paroled in 1933, during the depths of the Great Depression. That mattered little. He had already determined that he would strike back at society for the perceived wrongs he had suffered. His first move was smuggling guns to the friends he had made in prison. Thus armed, they effected an escape. In the meantime, Dillinger robbed a bank but was tracked down and jailed in Lima, Ohio. Now his friends came to his rescue. Uniformed and impersonating Indiana State Police officers, three of them walked into the jail at Lima, saying that they had extradition papers for one John Dillinger. Overpowering the sheriff and a deputy, they freed the man who would become their leader. The prison- and jailbreaks seemed like something from the pen of a Hollywood writer. The making of a legend had begun.

Dillinger led his band of desperadoes in a series of daring and well-executed bank robberies that earned him and his confederates more than \$300,000, the equivalent of some \$5 million in today's money, and made Dillinger Public Enemy No. 1. Between bank robberies he knocked over two state-police arsenals, acquiring automatic weapons, revolvers, thousands of rounds of ammunition, and bullet-proof vests. A freak circumstance allowed for Dillinger's capture in Tucson, and he was transferred to the Crown Point county jail in Indiana to await trial. County officials boasted that the jail was "escape proof." The ingenious Dillinger carved a gun out of a block of

wood, blacked it with shoe polish, and pulled it on a guard. Thinking he would be shot, the astonished guard opened the cell door. Dillinger fled in the county sheriff's new Ford. Nothing like adding insult to injury.

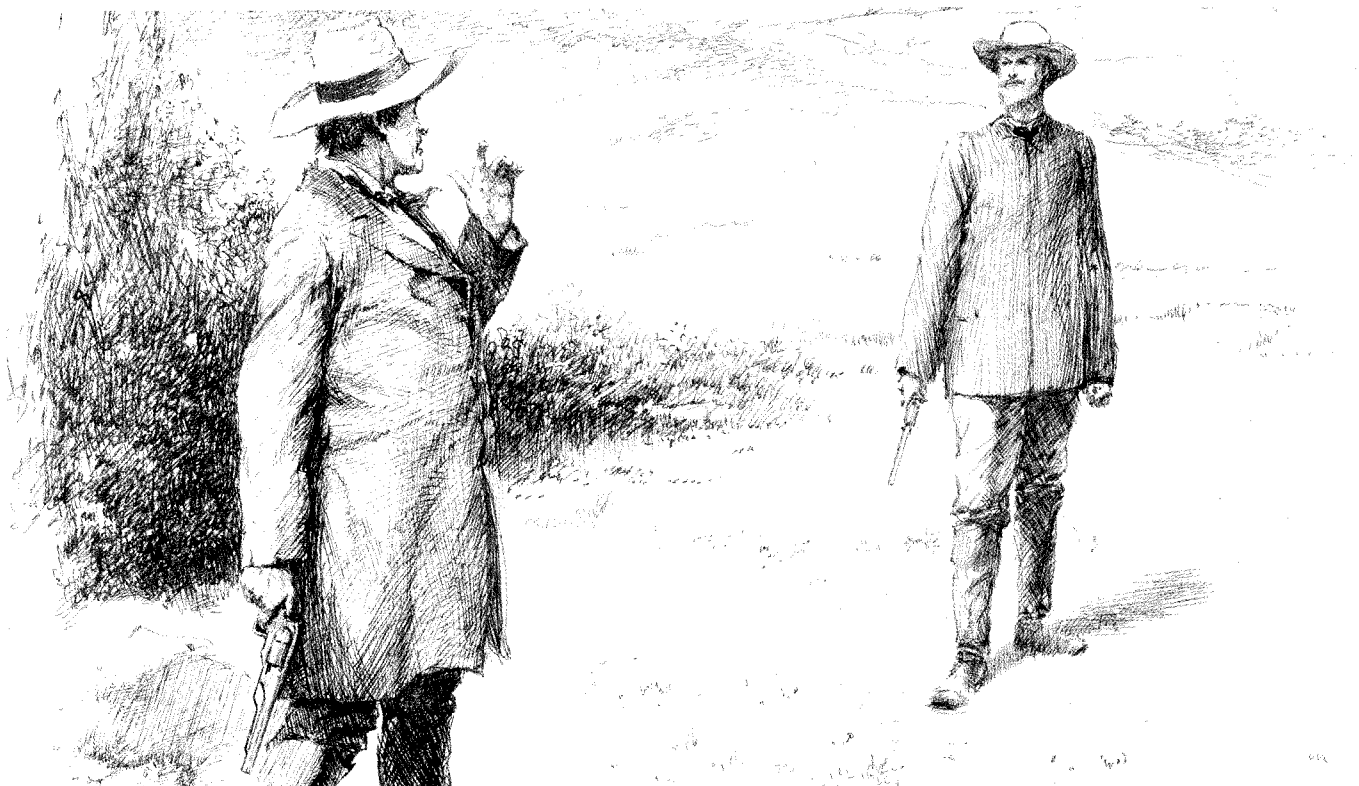
In St. Paul, Minnesota, Dillinger rendezvoused with an old partner in crime, Red Hamilton, and began the formation of a new gang that would include Baby Face Nelson and Homer Van Meter. Several bank robberies and shoot-outs with police and FBI agents followed, resulting in wounded and dead men on both sides. Dillinger himself was shot more than once. To resupply the gang Dillinger and Van Meter walked boldly into a police station in Warsaw, Indiana, and held it up, taking guns, ammunition, and bulletproof vests.

For rest and recreation Dillinger preferred northern Wisconsin. April 22, 1934, found him and his gang members, with wives and girlfriends, resting at the Little Bohemia Lodge near Mercer. Acting on a tip, 20 FBI agents, led by Melvin Purvis and Hugh Clegg, descended on the lodge that night. The agents mistakenly opened fire on a local resident and two Civilian Conservation Corps workers as they climbed into a car. All three were hit, and one died of his wounds. The gunfire alerted Dillinger and his boys, who engaged the agents in a brief firefight, killing one agent, and then escaped out the back of the lodge and into the darkness. Evidently none the wiser, the FBI agents continued firing into the lodge until the next morning, when a group of women emerged with their hands raised.

An apoplectic J. Edgar Hoover organized a special team to do nothing but track Dillinger. Nonetheless, it was not the work of the special team but a tip by a woman that caused agents to lie in wait for Dillinger outside the Biograph Theater in Chicago on July 22, 1934. When Dillinger emerged, he sensed something was amiss and dashed for an alley. Several agents opened fire. Riddled with bullets, Dillinger died without saying a word. Bystanders dipped their handkerchiefs or the hems of their skirts in the pools of his blood on the pavement.

Like the outlaws of the Old West, Dillinger was brought back to life on the silver screen. Lawrence Tierney played him in *Dillinger* (1945), Warren Oates in *Dillinger* (1973), Robert Conrad in *The Lady in Red* (1979), Mark Harmon in *Dillinger* (1991), and now Johnny Depp in *Public Enemies*. The legend lives because, for good or ill, misguided or not, we Americans love our outlaws.

Roger D. McGrath is the author of Gunfighters, Highwaymen, and Vigilantes.



E.W. Kemble

On Dueling, Divorce, and Red Indians

by Hugh Barbour, O.Praem.

IN FEBRUARY 1861, Joseph Sadoc Alemany, the first Roman Catholic bishop of the state of California, wrote an urgent pastoral letter to his flock. This letter was published immediately in the New York *Freeman's Journal*, and for this indiscretion its editor was imprisoned for a year in Fort Lafayette, and his presses were shut down. Archbishop Alemany was a Dominican, born in Spain, who pursued his calling in Italy and in Kentucky (where his Dominican brethren had imparted the foundations of classical learning to the young Jeff Davis) before being named bishop of California by Pius IX. He was an enthusiastic American citizen who, although (or because) he was a Spaniard, was hated by the Mexican government, against which originally and perennially corrupt regime he pursued a reparations case all the way to the Hague, and with the help of the U.S. government to boot. The archbishop, a Democrat, was deeply concerned about the looming war and so promulgated a letter against the principal moral evils afflicting his diocese: divorce and

dueling. He used these to describe the evil of the war, which he likened to a divorce and a duel writ large. This letter offers an example of a kind of rhetorical argumentation used in documents of the ecclesiastical magisterium with increasing frequency in modern times. Traditional teaching is presented, but justified more by notions of social progress and civilization than by the austere limits of the divine and natural law.

In the letter Archbishop Alemany deals quickly with divorce, which, like generous bankruptcy protection, was easily obtainable in California from its earliest days as a state. Then he moves on to dueling, which was outlawed in the first state constitution of 1849. Significantly, in contrast to divorce, he says, "We deprecate still more the unparalleled disaster of a duel, which no Christian or rational mind can countenance."

Even so, the duel had become so common in frontier California that the very politicians who had been eager to outlaw it at the state's first constitutional convention

were later constrained to become duelists themselves. Assemblyman George Johnston (1858), U.S. Sen. William Gwin (1853), and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of California David Terry (1859) all engaged in famous duels, even though each of them had favored the proscription of the practice.

A personalist, rhetorical defense of traditional morality can lead to the destruction of the most basic moral sense in modern people, who are so easily prey to ethical deracination.

The Church's proscription of the duel is very ancient, going back to the First Lateran Council (1170) and continuing all the way to the letter *Pastoralis officii* of Leo XIII (1891). In 1917 it was included in the first Code of Canon Law (although it is nowhere to be found in the present code of 1982, in which all the penalties for dueling have been abrogated). The duelists, their seconds, spectators, advisors, attending physicians, and clergy were all struck with excommunication reserved to the Holy See. The duelists were to suffer *infamia iuris*, legal disgrace causing the loss of privileges (such as being a godfather or best man) and, before the 19th century, the confiscation of goods and the denial of Church burial.

The morality of the duel is evaluated in tradition by two principles. The first is *moderamen inculpatæ tutelæ*, or the standard of guiltless self-defense, meaning that one is justified in using lethal means to defend one's life against an unjust aggressor. But the duel, which takes place *ex convicto* (by agreement) does not satisfy this criterion because, at the time the lethal force is to be taken, the "aggressor's" action has been agreed upon by the offended party, and so he is not then and there an actual aggressor. The second is that of the *media apta*, or apt means for repairing an injustice. The loss of honor or reputation, which is ordinarily the reason for a duel, cannot be repaired by lethal combat, but must be repaired by other legal means. The outcome of the combat itself cannot determine the injustice of the offense. Consequently, the duel is both an unjust exposure of one's own life and an intentional homicide of one who is not, at the point of the

duel, a true, unjust aggressor but, rather, an accomplice in a crime. Very different would be the case of one who is set upon by an opponent who says, "Take this saber or pistol and defend yourself like a man, for I am going to kill you now." In this scenario, a man would be justified in taking the offered weapon and defending himself.

In his letter, Archbishop Alemany writes,

Let us be permitted unhesitatingly to denounce the deadly contest, by which men laying claim to Christianity and refined manners, but acting as the red men of the forest, whose mental eye has never yet seen the least glimpse of civilization, divest themselves of all sense of duties which they owe to kindred or to society, and sacrifice, perhaps forever[,] the honor and welfare of parents, wife, or children . . . Deaf to every friendly advice, and thirsting after human blood, they go like beasts into the field to decide by brute force or impious chance who is right and who is wrong. We pity the poor Indians whose want of mental culture leads them to determine right from wrong with the bow and arrow. But what can exculpate the man who boasts of his civilization and intellectual refinement, yet who has not the strength of mind to discern that powder is not the standard of right!

In place of the traditional argument is an argument from urbanity. Here we are confronted with an instructive example of what becomes progressively more common as a justification for Christian morality: the superior culture of modern men *versus* that of the savage, an argument from moral progress instead of a rational judgment of the injustice endured and the legitimate means to overcome it. This is a rhetorical argument—not a presentation of the principles of natural law, but an appeal to human respect.

Family feeling, far from being violated by the duel, is precisely what justifies the duel in a man's mind in the first place—a sense of identity and manly dignity that must be defended as a possession more valuable than life, just as a woman may kill a man seeking to violate her, even though such a violation would not take her life. Its malice is not a primitive sense of honor but the illegitimate exposure of one's life and that of another as a means to repair a wrong that cannot be repaired by force. William Gwin's 1853 duel provides a perfect example of this. The senator from California faced U.S. Rep. J.W. McCorkle with rifles at 30 paces, wheeling at word and firing, which, in the signed account of the witness, "the two gentlemen did three

times without harming each other, when the affair was brought to termination by the friends of the parties, having discovered that their principals were fighting under a misapprehension of the facts." McCorkle apologized to Gwin, and that was it. In the meantime, the matter was relayed to Gwin's wife. After the first shot she said, "Let us thank God"; after the second, "Praise be"; after the third and the news of the apology, she expressed her disappointment in her spouse and his opponent: "There's been some mighty poor shooting today!" Family feeling might have something to do with the motive of the duelist.

All along, though, the Holy See continued to show that one may recognize the sounder instincts that were used as a pretext for an immoral practice. In answering *dubia* proposed by the bishops of Central Europe as late as 1947, the Holy See pronounced on the question of going before a "tribunal of honor" to determine whether an offense equal to a duel had occurred. Would doing so incur the penalties of canon law against dueling? The answer, wisely, was no, as long as the parties did not intend to proceed to a duel but were only determining the cause of the contest to be resolved by other, morally legitimate means. Even the greatest of practical moralists, St. Alphonsus Liguori, did not regard certain extenuating reasons for dueling as morally improbable—for example, a loss of honor before one's military peers sufficient to ruin one's livelihood—until Pope Benedict XIV forbade any dueling under any circumstances whatsoever. A sense of honor based on a man's name, or title, or profession, or even his physical strength has a very sound natural foundation, and this foundation ultimately is based on his family, present or future. This is something that civilized Christians may have in common with savages, and without which they may become inferior to them.

A personalist, rhetorical defense of traditional morality can lead to the destruction of the most basic moral sense in modern people, who are so easily prey to ethical deracination. A key example would be the understanding of marriage and marital relations as a remedy for concupiscence. Teach young men and women in our co-educational age that only the highest spiritual motives can adequately account for married love, and you will have them refusing simply on account of their feelings the legitimate advances of their spouses. The "marriage debt" can be much, much more, but it remains a debt and a duty without which men can be emasculated, not even able serenely to request a most basic right of marriage, and women can be doomed to perpetual suspicion of not being truly loved at all, because they are not loved per-

fectly here and now. And so there is the vicious cycle in which the progressive moral account ends up rendering impossible the very love it so exalts. That this approach and a mentality that is very open to divorce are aligned is clear. So yes, a civilized Christian husband and a savage red man have a basic human value in common, and of this he must not be ashamed, but only of sin and infidelity.

**Those who have the duty of teaching
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always offer the genuine reasons for
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In a society in which every standard is viewed as subject to a notion of progress that is, at root, technological and material, it can be dangerous to characterize fundamental human impulses as primitive or barbarous. Even if they are impulses corrupted by fallen nature, by concupiscence and pride, they remain rooted in our nature and are meant for the good. Drawing traditional moral conclusions from arguments based on social progress can utterly undermine and obscure the moral truths that those traditional conclusions imply. Dueling is wrong, but not because an Indian brave might do the same thing and for the same reasons, and not because it is violent, but because the power to coerce is a property of law, and if there is no implicit threat of force, either moral or physical, then there can be no law. At its most grave, this can be seen in John Paul II's affirmation that the threat of an eternal Hell is a necessary guarantee of a fixed standard of morality.

Nowhere is the danger of the *argumentum ad hominem rubrum* more apparent than in the bishop's use of divorce and the duel as a metaphor for civil war. The conditions under which a defensive or an offensive war may be fought are clear. In his letter he does not address them but merely describes war again as a descent into tribal barbarism. But a war is not justly fought at all unless it is fought for the sake of one's family and native common good. We now live in a society in which fighting for one's own people is precisely the only kind of war that is considered unjust. Every interest, refined (oil!) and technological and financial, may excuse, but war for the sake

of tribe, religion, or territory is deemed not only barbarism but terrorism. (One nation is exempt from this contemporary prohibition, though, and it is not the United States.) The Christian Croat or Serb, or the Palestinian, is a would-be war criminal, since he only seems to care about something as primitive as his own country. Thus, wars will increase, because there is no motive limited to truly human goods which can restrain them. Ideology at the service of plutocracy is the new order of things. We now have "smart bombs," after all.

And yet the good archbishop was in the right, in spite of himself. In a very important passage of his encyclical *Veritatis splendor* John Paul II pointed out that theologians who reflect on the moral law are bound by the conclusions

of the magisterium, but not by the arguments evinced for them, which they are free to replace with others that they find more sound or cogent. To this we respond with a lusty "Q.E.D."

The course of the last century and a half is instructive. Those who have the duty of teaching in the Church and in civil society must always offer the genuine reasons for human conduct and use the rhetorical and odious comparison very sparingly. Otherwise, the just who love family and honor may be relegated to the special reservations of the Brave New World, where we will all be red Indians.

Fr. Hugh is prior of St. Michael's Abbey in Trabuco Canyon, California.

Rose Catalogue in January

by Maryann Corbett

You want them, yes, the year's new hybrid teas,
long-stemmed, high-centered, pointed, budded tight.
You hesitate at old varieties'
neediness, at fogs of pesticide,
thorny defenses, sensitivities—

But close your eyes. Think how you loved them once,
those hundred-petalled secrecies within
Fantin-Latour, those foldings, sinuous, dense.
Think of rugosa petals' openness,
of rounded hips that bore the weight of winter,

and albas: how their breathings stir the past.
How essence, concentrated, will persist
when nothing's left but fragments in a jar,
complexities still fragrant on the air.

Conservative Leninists and the War on Terror

by Ted Galen Carpenter

ONE LONG-STANDING HALLMARK of Western conservative thought is the emphasis on the rule of law. Earlier generations of conservatives understood that, without such constraints, liberty would be imperiled and a free society would ultimately descend into tyranny. As Lord Acton observed, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Even during the 20th century, most conservatives were wary of unfettered pragmatism, and they viewed with horror the assertion of Vladimir Lenin and his communist followers that the end justifies the means. To the contrary, conservatives stressed that even when the goals were worthy, the use of unconstitutional, illegal, or immoral means was not justified.

In recent years, though, a troubling number of prominent figures on the political right have seemingly abandoned that standard, especially with respect to national-security issues. Instead, their sole guiding principle appears to be whether an initiative "works"—in the sense of producing the desired result. Whether that initiative violates fundamental constitutional or moral standards is seen as irrelevant and, frankly, a somewhat quaint consideration. By embracing ruthless pragmatism, these individuals come perilously close to being conservative Leninists.

Signs of such attitudes began to surface during the Cold War, and they were among the reasons why I left Young Americans for Freedom, the Young Republicans, and other conservative organizations. Increasingly, I heard the argument that, because America confronted a dangerous, ruthless, and evil adversary, our country could not be squeamish about the tactics used to thwart that threat. The policies U.S. officials pursued reflected a willingness to cut moral and legal corners to achieve the broader objective. The cynical military coups that the Eisenhower administration executed to topple democratic, albeit left-leaning, governments in Iran and Guatemala were international manifestations of this attitude. So, too, were lucrative military- and economic-aid programs to some of the most odious dictators on the planet, including Mobutu Sese Seko

in Zaire, the shah of Iran, Nicaragua's Anastasio Somoza, and Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines. Domestically, most conservatives seemed comfortable with government programs that spied on, and even harassed, critics of U.S. foreign policy.

That tendency to disregard legal and moral considerations has resurfaced and become even more virulent in conservative political and policy circles regarding counterterrorism measures since the September 11 attacks. In a series of memos to the President (the most infamous one being the August 1, 2002, "torture memo") conservative legal scholars John Yoo and Jay Bybee, at the time lawyers for the Department of Justice, made sweeping assertions about presidential authority to wage the "War on Terror." Among other arguments, Yoo and Bybee contended that "enhanced interrogation techniques" (a term that was little more than a euphemism for torture) were not barred by the U.S. Constitution, treaties the United States had signed, or any federal statute. Indeed, any congressional act that purported to limit the president's power in that area would be invalid.

More broadly, Yoo and Bybee adopted a breathtaking interpretation of presidential power in the arena of national security. Among other steps, they argued, the president could order the indefinite detention of any terrorist suspect—even a U.S. citizen arrested on U.S. soil—without a trial or even an evidentiary hearing.

How far John Yoo was willing to go in placing the president beyond any legal restraints became apparent in a December 2005 debate with a critic of the Bush administration's policies. When asked whether a president could order that the testicles of a suspected terrorist's child be crushed in order to pressure the father, Yoo astonishingly declined to condemn such an outrageous idea as legally and morally offensive. Instead he replied, "I think it depends on why the President thinks he needs to do that."

The Bush administration sought to put most of the recommendations of the Yoo-Bybee memos into practice. This is troubling on several counts. The Geneva Conventions prohibit not only torture but, in equally categorical terms, the use of "violence," "cruel treatment," or even "humiliating or degrading treatment" of detainees. Moreover, the War Crimes Act of 1996 made any grave breach of these prohibitions a felony. A number of interrogation techniques that the Bush administration approved, most notably waterboarding and extended sleep deprivation, were rather clear violations. The August 2002 memo even approved any CIA enhanced-interrogation technique that did not lead to organ failure

or other severe, permanent physical damage.

David Addington, the general counsel in Vice President Dick Cheney's office, chafed at legal restrictions because in his view they would hobble efforts "to quickly [*sic*] obtain information from captured terrorists." Addington strongly endorsed the most radical claim in the August 2002 memo: that the president could authorize *any* interrogation method. Treaties, and even U.S. laws, forbidding "any person" to commit torture simply did "not apply" to the commander in chief, he argued.

A number of interrogation techniques that the Bush administration approved, most notably waterboarding and extended sleep deprivation, were rather clear violations of the Geneva Conventions.

In a May 2009 speech to the American Enterprise Institute, Cheney himself embraced such reasoning and vehemently defended the record of the Bush administration on pragmatic grounds: "In the years after 9/11, our government also understood that the safety of the country required collecting information known only to the worst of the terrorists." And in some cases, "that information could be gained only through tough interrogations." The intelligence officers "who questioned the terrorists can be proud of their work and proud of the results, because they prevented the violent death of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of innocent people." A bold claim, and one that former CIA director George Tenet had made previously: "I know that this program has saved lives. I know we've disrupted plots."

Cheney's dismissive attitude toward criticism of the policies on moral or legal grounds was especially unsettling. He recounted that one high-level Al Qaeda operative had said that he would talk as soon as he got to the United States and saw his lawyer. "But like many critics of interrogations," Cheney sneered, "he clearly misunderstood the business at hand. American personnel were not there to commence an elaborate legal proceeding, but to extract information from him before al-Qaeda could strike again and kill more of our people."

Other conservative figures echoed Cheney's condemnation of moves by the Obama administration to investigate whether unlawful abuses of detainees had taken place. House Republican leader John Boehner stated,

Our intelligence professionals have done a marvelous job keeping us safe. Faced with threats never before seen in our history, they have provided our troops with crucial information they need to fight our enemies abroad and protect our citizens at home. They deserve our gratitude . . .

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell was even more succinct: "I think it's important to remember, from 9/11 until the end of the Bush administration, not another single attack on the U.S. homeland. We were obviously doing something right."

Conservative pundits likewise lined up behind the proposition that it was unpatriotic even to advocate an investigation into whether government employees may have violated the law and committed acts of torture. Syndicated columnist Cal Thomas argued that the Bush administration's approach clearly had been successful, and he scorned Obama and others who worried that the tactics may have violated fundamental American values: "History will show that this approach protected our 'values' against those who would destroy them." The American Enterprise Institute's Reuel Marc Gerecht, though, made the most blatant Leninist defense. Writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, he stated,

Regardless of whether one believes CIA-inflicted waterboarding, sleep deprivation or severe psychological coercion (suggesting that harm could come to a family member of a taciturn al Qaeda detainee) constitute torture, such actions may have produced an intelligence bonanza and saved thousands of lives.

A striking feature of the defense that Cheney and his ideological allies have put forth is the avoidance of any serious discussion of whether the measures were illegal and/or immoral. Moreover, there is almost no willingness to address the point that at least some of the accused terrorists held at the Guantanamo Bay detention center and overseas facilities were innocent. Indeed, the term "accused terrorists" is never used. Proponents of enhanced-interrogation techniques invariably describe detainees as "captured terrorists" or simply "terrorists," as though the guilt of every

single individual were beyond dispute.

Yet that notion defies credulity. There were several thousand people captured in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other locations. The Guantanamo facility held more than 775 detainees at the peak, and many more were held at Abu Ghraib and various CIA “black sites” overseas. Even assuming that CIA, FBI, and military personnel were scrupulous in trying to establish the guilt of individuals they captured, it is a certainty that some innocent people were caught up in the sweep. Indeed, given the bitter clan and tribal rivalries in Afghanistan, and the equally bitter Sunni-Shiite-Kurdish animosity in Iraq, it is highly probable that a sizable number of parties were accused by personal or ideological enemies, even when they had no connection to Al Qaeda.

It is difficult enough to accept the reality that U.S. personnel committed acts of torture, even against *bona fide* terrorists. But it is appalling that some of the people deprived of their liberty for months, and in some cases years, without trial—and subjected to torture—were in fact innocent. Yet approximately 50 percent of the inmates held by the U.S. military at Abu Ghraib were ultimately released without being prosecuted. A number of detainees at Guantanamo have likewise been quietly released. In both cases, the implicit admission is that they were not terrorists.

The “ends justifies the means” defense of the Bush administration’s War on Terror tactics proves faulty even on its own terms. Contrary to the assertion by proponents of enhanced-interrogation techniques, there is serious doubt about their effectiveness. In his AEI speech, as on so many other occasions, Cheney failed to provide specifics about terrorist attacks that were foiled or to offer any evidence that those techniques saved thousands, much less hundreds of thousands, of lives.

Moreover, several former officials with experience in interrogation have disputed the claims that significant amounts of valuable information were obtained. Even the validity of information provided by high-level Al Qaeda operative Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the veritable poster boy for the effectiveness of torture, is now uncertain. As reported by *Vanity Fair*, one former senior CIA official, who read all of the interrogation reports on Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, concluded that “90 percent of it was f--king bullsh-t.” Former CIA officer Robert Baer makes the obvious point that “you can get anyone to confess to anything if the torture is bad enough.”

Even worse, there are indications that such harsh tactics have made the overall terrorist threat worse. Matthew Alexander, the senior interrogator in Iraq on a task force

charged with finding Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, made a most sobering observation in *The Daily Beast*:

I listened time and time again to captured foreign fighters cite the torture at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo as their main reason for coming to Iraq to fight. Consider that 90 percent of the suicide bombers in Iraq are those foreign fighters, and you can easily conclude that we have lost hundreds, if not thousands of American lives because of our policy of torture and abuse.

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Fortunately, not all conservatives have succumbed to the temptation to disregard moral and legal constraints on the grounds that terrorism poses a serious threat to the well-being of the American people. Testifying before the House Committee on Armed Services, former State Department official William H. Taft IV, grandson of Robert A. Taft, the leading conservative political figure of his era, provided a reminder of the importance of adhering to principle in troubling times: “It is when we are enraged—when our blood boils—that we most need to adhere to the rule of law as we have established it, not change it to suit our convenience.” That is an appropriate rebuke to Dick Cheney, John Yoo, and other conservatives who seem all too willing to embrace Leninist tactics.

Ted Galen Carpenter, vice president for defense and foreign-policy studies at the Cato Institute, is the author of eight books on international affairs, including Smart Power: Toward a Prudent Foreign Policy for America (2008).



WHAT'S BEHIND THE CULT of "global warming"? We've been hearing about it for years on television, in magazines, from politicians, and from certain corporate entities: Mankind is destroying the earth, and the only solution is to "go green." Unless we radically change our behavior, the oceans will rise, catastrophe will ensue, and that will be the end of life as we know it.

Now, I'm no scientist, but I'm old enough to remember "global cooling," an idea that was popular in the 1970's. A 1975 *Newsweek* story, "The Cooling World," reported "ominous signs that the Earth's weather patterns have begun to change," highlighting "a drop of half a degree [Fahrenheit] in average ground temperatures in the Northern Hemisphere between 1945 and 1968." The article trumpeted the "truth" of the moment: "The evidence in support of these predictions [of global cooling] has now begun to accumulate so massively that meteorologists are hard-pressed to keep up with it." Only massive government intervention could head off disaster: "The longer the planners (politicians) delay, the more difficult will they find it to cope with climatic change once the results become grim reality."

Three decades later, *Newsweek* published a "correction," admitting it had been "spectacularly wrong"—but this was no reason to take their future weather predictions with a very large grain of salt, because "in fact, the story wasn't 'wrong' in the journalistic sense of 'inaccurate.'" After all, *Newsweek* was just uncritically regurgitating the unfounded alarmism of some scientists.

Today, if you so much as look cross-eyed at the "official" party line, you're deemed a "denialist"—a bit of linguistic abuse that underscores how desperate these people are to crush any and all opposition to their agenda. If you don't accept their "science"—and plenty of reputable scientists don't—you're a moral

monster on a par with a holocaust denier.

What accounts for this intensity? Why did the world's leaders gather in Copenhagen recently and solemnly pledge to take unspecified "action" to fight this latest augur of worldwide doom?

Here in the United States, there's one inflexible principle: When in doubt, follow the money. And the money trail leads to . . . Goldman Sachs, the Obama administration's favorite investment-banking house and the chief beneficiary of the economic "reforms" and bank bailouts that have swelled Wall Street's coffers and provoked the biggest and most unedifying spectacle of public piggery since the subprime mortgage boom.

The machinery of the "cap-and-trade" scam is a simple and fail-safe way for Goldman Sachs to create an entire market based on a government mandate. As Matt Taibbi pointed out in *Rolling Stone*, "Goldman won't even have to rig the game. It will be rigged in advance." With limits on the amount of pollution a given company can emit, it will be possible for it to buy "carbon credits" from other outfits that haven't used up their government-mandated allotments. The "cap" on emissions will be constantly lowered, which means that these carbon credits will become scarcer—and more valuable—as time goes by.

The market for carbon credits is conservatively estimated at a trillion dollars, all made possible by government regula-

tion of the sort one might expect the private sector to resist. But not Goldman Sachs, which has been in the vanguard of calling for radical regulation. When former Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson was head of the firm, he took a personal interest in writing the bank's environmentalist manifesto, arguing that "voluntary action alone cannot solve the climate-change problem." Voluntary action is something Goldman Sachs cannot depend on to ensure its gargantuan profit margins, especially not in the age of crony "capitalism." As Taibbi trenchantly puts it, the cap-and-trade scam

is really just a carbon tax structured so that private interests collect the revenues. Instead of simply imposing a fixed government levy on carbon pollution and forcing unclean energy producers to pay for the mess they make, cap-and-trade will allow a small tribe of greedy-as-hell Wall Street swine to turn yet another commodities market into a private tax-collection scheme.

The bank bailout enriched them beyond the dreams of avarice, but that wasn't enough for Goldman Sachs. They want to replace the imploded derivatives market, and the "credit swap" and subprime scams, with a new rip-off. "Go green," they exhort us—because it's the color of money. ♦

Going Green for Goldman

Swift-Counting

by Maryann Corbett

High summer. Sunset, leaning. On the lawn,
the knot of curious seekers tightens, drawn
to tease apart the known and the unknown

by squinting at a soot-stained chimney stack.
Around its tower, arcing flecks of black:
the swifts, drawn by the dark, are coming back.

One comet from their reeling galaxy
curves in, approaching asymptotically,
then veers again, away from certainty

till finally, yanked on some uncanny string,
with the barest flicking motion of a wing
it brakes in air above the opening

and drops. And seven voices sing out, "One!"
as, denser by the minute, swifts return
to the black-hole center of this darkened sun,

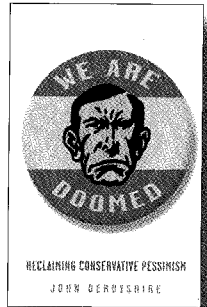
falling at last so thick no human sight
is certain by itself of being right.
They call out numbers in the failing light

to firm their grip on facts, though it's unclear
what use these are, or where they go from here
as progress makes the chimneys disappear.

One conjured total settled on the page,
they scatter in goodbyeing badinage.
The moon's half-measure blurs along its edge.

A Huge and Healthy Pessimism

by Jack Trotter



We Are Doomed: Reclaiming Conservative Pessimism

by John Derbyshire
New York: Crown Forum
272 pp., \$26.00

IN HIS SPLENDIDLY SARDONIC *Devil's Dictionary*, that old gringo Ambrose Bierce defines pessimism as "a philosophy forced upon the convictions of the observer by the disheartening prevalence of the optimist with his scarecrow hope and his unsightly smile." Bierce would have smiled—or, rather, frowned—kindly upon John Derbyshire's new book, an often droll demolition of the facile, smiley-faced optimism that passes for political philosophy these days. Early on he offers a diagnosis that will warm the cockles of the heart of many a *Chronicles* reader: Conservatism in America has been hijacked by "infantile . . . temptations to optimism, to wishful thinking, to happy talk, to cheerily preposterous theories about human beings and the human world." His prognosis is more succinct: "We are doomed." Just how seriously does Derbyshire expect his readers to take his counsels of despair? Very seriously, indeed, though with a caveat: "Despair should be large and general, not petty and particular." I am happy to report that Derbyshire's despair is as "large and general" as any self-respecting pessimist might wish.

I certainly can't begin to do justice to the rich profusion of optimistic imbecility on display in Derbyshire's catalog of hap-

py horrors, so I will peruse a few key chapters. In "Diversity: Nothing to Celebrate," he responds to Rodney King's blubbing query after the 1992 Los Angeles riots: "People, I just want to say, you know, can we all get along?" Derbyshire's answer is an emphatic "no, we can't." The gurus of the "Diversity cult" would have us believe not only that people of diverse races, customs, and religions can get along, but that diversity is also beneficial: "[People] will be better and happier than if they had been left to stagnate in dull homogeneity." A diverse corporate America, for example, will be more creative and better positioned to succeed in the multicultural marketplace. Schools with diverse faculties and students will be better equipped to negotiate the complex (but never dull!) realities of a multicultural world and will be morally improved by the experience. Our military, too, should be a New Model Army of Diversity, for what could be more uplifting than the spectacle of American blacks and whites, Hispanics and Asians, Muslims and Christians, hetero- and homosexuals, *et al.*, joining arms to wreak havoc in pesky places like Serbia and Afghanistan—or any other bastion of resistance to Global Democracy?

Of course, it is no longer a question of "will be" or "can be." The triumph of the diversity cult is virtually a *fait accompli*. Did Americans rush to embrace diversity with open arms? Certainly not. Derbyshire points out that diversity mon-itors and managers have been busy every

step of the way: persuading, propagandizing, hectoring, threatening—but always smiling! Indeed, diversity has become a growth industry in America. Diversity officers in major universities and corporations are forces to be reckoned with. The CDO (chief diversity officer) at Washington State University, for instance, commands an annual budget of three million dollars and employs a staff of 55. One would think that after several decades of unrelenting labor and such a tremendous allocation of resources, the diversity impresarios might have something impressive to show for their efforts. On the contrary, it turns out that increased diversity is a key factor in the decline of "social capital" (the total aggregate of a society's social networks and associations), a phenomenon studied by political scientist Robert Putnam. The results of Putnam's research, released to the public in 2007, were discouraging (for Putnam, anyway). In a study involving 30,000 Americans in 41 locations, virtually all the indicators suggest that "out-group trust—how much you trust people who are different from yourself—is lower in places with lots of diversity." Even worse, if you live in a locale characterized by high diversity, your "in-group" trust level is likely to decrease by as much as 50 percent. In short, far from creating social harmony, diversity generates more alienation. A number of conservative writers have drawn on Putnam's work, but few have been honest enough to suggest, as Derbyshire does, that "eth-

nic homogeneity may be necessary for a stable, liberal democracy.”

All of this is bad news for those who have optimistically embraced a dream of multicultural plenitude. But is it really something to get terribly worked up about? After all—as Derbyshire admits—it’s not as though Americans are at each other’s throats with pitchforks. No, but his own evidence strongly suggests that Americans can’t expect to remain immune from the rising tide of ethnic and religious conflict that afflicts almost every other part of the globe, a specter that raises troubling questions about U.S. immigration policy.

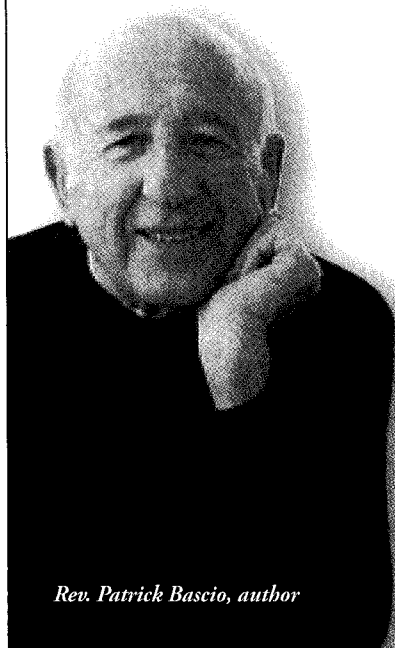
In a chapter entitled “Immigration: Inviting the World,” Derbyshire argues that few areas of political debate in America are as subject to delusional, sentimental thinking as immigration. On this issue, as with diversity, there is little difference between the two major parties: Self-advertised “conservatives” are just as likely as their liberal counterparts to repeat the tired canard that America is a nation of immigrants, that we have always managed to assimilate immigrant waves in the past, and that we will do so again. So the mantra goes. “Kumbaya conservatives breezily assure us that all is well; that the current great wave of immigrants are ‘good-hearted people’ who will assimilate just as the 1890-1920 Great Wave did.” Those who traffic in such pabulum never reflect that conditions before World War I were drastically different. Then, the American manufacturing and agricultural sectors were still creating plenty of new jobs; today, those jobs are rapidly disappearing (or being outsourced). Another difference is that the assimilationist ethic that was taken for granted by the “naïve Americanism” of our forefathers has been replaced by a multicultural ethic that promotes what Derbyshire (who is fond of neologisms) calls “absimilation”—the refusal to assimilate. A third difference, little noted, is that as many as one third of the Great Wave immigrants did not stay.

When they failed, there was no Nanny State to share their pain.

Of course, the 20th century brought many changes, among them the feminization of America—a change that is now accelerating rapidly. In a chapter entitled “Sex: Surplus to Requirements,” Derbyshire argues, on the one hand, that female suffrage has been a major cause of the country’s slide toward socialism, and, on the other, that the damage is probably irreversible because, in a “postindustrial society, men just don’t do very well.” Why that should be is not something Derbyshire explores systematically, but the argument, however anecdotal, is one that I find persuasive. In short, the postindustrial economy simply doesn’t require traditionally masculine virtues or capacities such as “physical courage, danger-seeking, the honor principle, belligerence, chivalry, endurance [and] small-group loyalty.”

Women’s superior communication and social (i.e., “networking”) skills are perfectly suited to the hive-like postindustrial economy and its emerging emphasis on “soft” management styles. Derbyshire, who spent a number of years in the corporate world, opines that men “seem rather out of place in the ‘tubes and cubes’ of the modern office,” where traditional masculine traits are not only increasingly useless but even counterproductive. In their place we find the “mildness of manners, the endless tiny courtesies, the yielding and compromising, the cheery assertions of delivery-room stoicism . . . that are necessary to get this kind of work done.” It should come as no surprise, then, that from 1995 to 2005 women entered American graduate schools at more than twice the rate of men. Moreover, the young men who are most successful in the new economy are those who have been most willing

Unfettered immigration policy is harmful, dangerous, and wrong, says Fr. Patrick Bascio in his new book, *On the Immorality of Illegal Immigration: A Priest Poses An Alternative Christian View*



Rev. Patrick Bascio, author

“A rare immigration enforcement voice in the Catholic clergy”

— Brenda Walker, VDARE.com, 10/14/09

“Patrick Bascio, enriched by his theological formation and years of experience with the underprivileged, considers the ramifications of illegal immigration that we sometimes fail to see because our perspective is insufficiently broad.”

— Rev. Dominique Peridans

On the Immorality of Illegal Immigration: A Priest Poses an Alternative Christian View by Fr. Patrick Bascio (Author House 2009) 215 pages.

Order at Amazon.com and AuthorHouse.com \$16.50 postpaid. Available as an ebook: \$4.95

to shed their masculinity and adapt to the feminine style.

What should conservatives make of all this? The properly pessimistic prognosis is grim: Traditional conservatism (as opposed to the happy-face, compassionate variety) simply is not very attractive to the gentler sex, nor to the young metrosexual drones who service them. As society becomes increasingly feminized, genuine conservatism will retreat to the margins.

While Derbyshire's pessimism is unrelenting, the humor with which he invests his dire auguries is a redeeming feature. This is perhaps most evident in his romp through contemporary art, literature, music, and popular entertainment: "Culture: Pooped Out." As the punning chapter title suggests, Derbyshire's take on the cultural sphere is rather scatolog-

ical. Consider the "masterpiece" of celebrated Italian artist Piero Manzoni, a "work" entitled *Merda d'artista*, which consists "of 90 one-ounce portions of Manzoni's own solid waste, each portion neatly canned and each can numbered." Those neat packages are still around, circulating through the modern-art marketplace at dizzying prices. The Tate Gallery in London recently acquired a single can for \$61,000, justifying the purchase on the grounds that Manzoni was "an important international artist" who was making a profound statement about the "production of art." Not to be outdone, an American collector recently paid \$80,000 for another can. Derbyshire suggests that what is most profound about Manzoni's statement is the tiny faults the "artist" deliberately left in the sealing of the cans, some of which have apparently been known to explode. (In an aside, Derbyshire asks, "How would you like to be in the Restoration Department when one of those suckers comes in?")

Derbyshire's point is not to deplore such chicanery with an anguished wringing of hands (as cultural critics on the right so often have), but to suggest that our culture is simply exhausted, "pooped out." Thus, at the level of popular entertainment, we witness an increasing preoccupation with filth and the pornographic. Among the most popular genres on American television is what Derbyshire calls "dead-whore shows," in which "plainclothes police types and pathologists in lab coats converse in a sort of portentous murmur over the corpses of mutilated street ladies." In lieu of character development one gets "lingering close-ups of entry wounds, exit wounds, contusions . . . dismemberments, decapitations, eviscerations, exsanguinations, etc."

Is all this really just a symptom of an exhausted culture? I would argue, to the contrary, that "high art" and popular culture are by now virtually indistinguishable in their mutual reveling in spiritual

debasement. Those "dead-whore" shows, for instance, are direct descendants of the work of surrealists Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray, both of whom were fascinated by the "transgressive" art of serial killers, especially when said "art" involved the dismembered bodies of women. Surely, there is something more sinister than "exhaustion" at work here. But Derbyshire, as a self-described "functional atheist," acknowledges no spiritual reality, and would thus reject the notion that the human body is in any sense sacred. While he is willing to make common cause with those whose pessimism (in secular matters) is derived from what he calls "Religionism," he doesn't really trust such a pessimism, presumably because it does not breathe exclusively the "sweet cool draft of indifferent Truth" produced by physical science. Religionists can't be trusted not to ally themselves with the Culturalists (those who believe that "human nature has very little innate structure and is extremely plastic"). An authentic pessimism is, paradoxically, not really a part of human nature; it is something we must "struggle towards."

Perhaps Derbyshire's admirable pessimism should be leavened with a measure of skepticism, especially toward the truth claims of modern science. He avers that religious belief serves merely a consolatory function but admits to being baffled by the phenomenon of consciousness. He allies himself with the "Mysterians," who, as it turns out, are not some New Age cult but a rather select bunch of atheists like Derbyshire who are willing to concede that the existence of human consciousness is a problem which eludes the grasp of scientific understanding. Some of them opine that consciousness will never be understood; some are more confident that, in time, it will. Is this a little like waiting for the Second Coming?

Jack Trotter writes from Charleston, South Carolina.

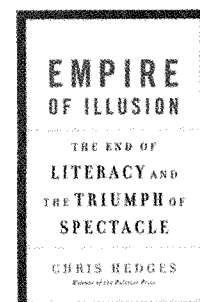


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Don't Worry, Be Happy

by Clark Stooksbury

Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle

by Chris Hedges

New York: Nation Books

232 pp., \$24.95

CHRIS HEDGES, a former *New York Times* war correspondent, is not happy with the current state of American civilization, a view he makes crystal clear in *Empire of Illusion*. Hedges is an independent man of the left and a cultural conservative. *Chronicles* readers may recall the controversy over his commencement address in 2003 at Rockford College, covered by Scott P. Richert in *The Rockford Files* (August 2003). In that speech, Hedges delivered a harsh, unpopular, and largely accurate assessment of the coming occupation in Iraq. *Empire of Illusion* renders a similarly harsh assessment of the state of American culture in 2009.

Empire is a scattershot look at a variety of topics ranging from the porn industry to elite education. Hedges believes that Americans have forsaken reality for a world of lies and empty entertainment. Some of the more troubling results are plain—a series of disastrous foreign wars and a collapsing economy. The major problems we currently face were avoidable, had people paid attention to calls for military restraint and to questions regarding the ability of the housing market to rise indefinitely. In Hedges' view, Americans are as distracted by fantasy as those who view the shadows on the wall

of Plato's cave:

those who manipulate the shadows that dominate our lives are the agents, publicists, marketing departments, promoters, script writers, television and movie producers, advertisers, video technicians, photographers, . . . pollsters, public announcers, and television news personalities who create the vast stage for illusion.

"[N]othing," Hedges claims, "is off-limits, including death. As long as it can be packaged and turned into drama, it works."

As to higher education, "elite universities disdain honest intellectual inquiry, which is by its nature distrustful of authority." Hedges is particularly critical of the results of specialization, and of the dense jargon that characterizes it, recalling his inability to decipher the meaning of a fellow graduate of the Harvard Divinity School, though he shared her academic training. Of such as she, he insists,

[b]y any standard comprehensible within the tradition of Western Civilization . . . these people are illiterate. They cannot recognize the vital relationship between power and morality. They have forgotten, or never knew, that moral traditions are the

product of civilization.

Another jargon-laden field ridiculed by Hedges is "Positive Psychology." As he describes it, Positive Psychology is a scheme to manufacture happiness out of thin air and institutionalize conformity. Happiness is a slippery concept and difficult to measure, but government agencies, schools, and corporations have adopted the techniques of various Positive Psychology gurus. Hedges, comparing adherents to Positive Psychology with the addled denizens of Huxley's *Brave New World*, concludes that

the awful feeling that being positive may not, in fact, work if one is laid off or becomes sick must be suppressed. Here, in the land of happy thoughts, there are no gross injustices, no abuses of authority, no economic and political systems to challenge, and no reason to complain. Here, we are all happy.

In respect of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, major media outlets often served as stenographers to sources within the Bush administration. Judith Miller, who worked at the *New York Times* (Hedges' former paper), admitted, according to Hedges, that her work was "only as good as [her] sources." Hedges counters that reporters should "always begin with the assumption that those

in power have an agenda and are rarely bound to the truth." That statement is true of government at all times, but it is especially applicable to the Bush administration's campaign to sell the Iraq war in 2002 and 2003.

In those heady days, President Bush and his subordinates filled the airwaves, the newspapers, and the World Wide Web with lies, innuendos, half-truths, and hysterical fear-mongering about mushroom clouds rising above America's towns and cities. Bush-administration officials earnestly counseled Americans to have plenty of duct tape and plastic sheeting on hand in preparation for Saddam's terror attacks. But when the dust settled, Americans found that they had once again been sold a bill of goods. The former dictator who was fished out of a spider hole and deloused was obviously no threat to the United States, and,

while violence has subsided over the last two years, the United States is still mired in an expensive and bloody occupation of Iraq. The arguments against invading Iraq were complex and nuanced, while the case for war was as simple as shouting, "Go team!" The shouters prevailed, as they likely will again when citizens of what Gore Vidal dubbed the "United States of Amnesia" have forgotten about the current conflict.

Hedges argues that

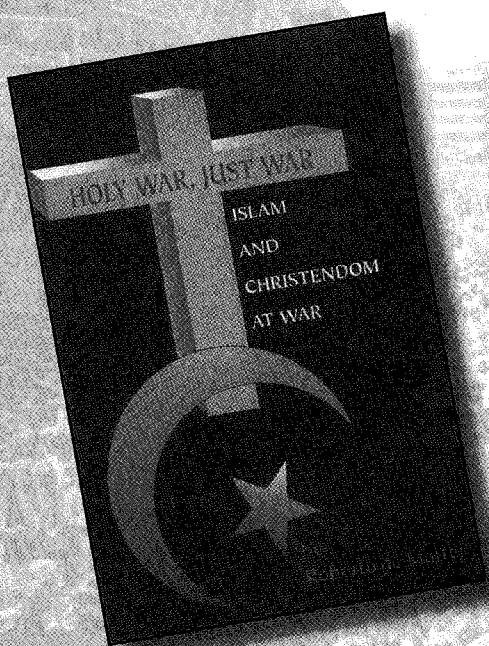
[t]he more we sever ourselves from a literate, print-based world, a world of complexity and nuance, a world of ideas, for one informed by comforting, reassuring images, fantasies, slogans, celebrities and a lust for violence, the more we are destined to implode.

The country faces spiraling debt, seemingly endless wars, and environmental decay, to name only a few of our serious problems; but our political culture is unable to hold a serious discussion about them. Politicians aspire to say as little possible in a substantive way, and the media are bound by their obeisance to corporate interests and p.c. pieties. There is no indication that the American appetite for "complexity and nuance" is increasing.

Although he foresees a "Weimar America," characterized by debt and decline, on the horizon, Hedges closes with a modicum of optimism. "Hope exists. It will always exist. It will not come through nation-states, but it will prevail, even if we as distinct individuals and civilizations vanish."

Clark Stooksbury writes from
Knoxville, Tennessee.

FROM CHRONICLES PRESS



Holy War, Just War

Islam and Christendom at War

by Roberto de Mattei

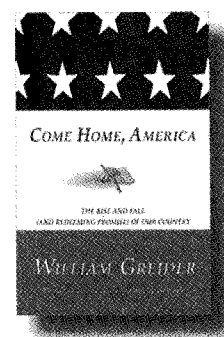
"The term 'clash of civilizations' is not a palatable one in political and media circles," writes Roberto de Mattei, but it is the only proper framework for understanding how the fundamental theological differences between Christianity and Islam inform the way their adherents wage war. In this important work, he explains these differences with careful scholarship and defends with eloquence the "lawfulness of war against an enemy who is attacking the West, with the aim of establishing a moral and social order that is radically opposed to our history and tradition."

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Populist Reveries

by H.A. Scott Trask



Come Home, America: The Rise and Fall (and Redeeming Promise) of Our Country
by William Greider
New York: Rodale
328 pp., \$25.95

MR. GREIDER IS a hopeful man. Although he believes the United States is in deep trouble, “deeper than many people suppose and the authorities want to acknowledge,” he also believes the country is on the cusp of a second populist uprising, which will force elites to confront the perils of globalism, militarism, economic inequality, ecological crisis, and debt. He admits that his friends regard his optimism as “delusional.” The reader may be forgiven for drawing the same conclusion after studying his persuasive argument for national decline and democratic corruption.

Consider his major theme: “Come home, America. Instead of trying to run the world, let us tend our own wounded society.” The advice is sound, but his expectation that “the people” will demand it be done is not. There is no evidence whatsoever for such an isolationist revival, but rather than deal with what that means, Greider retreats into bombastic self-assertion: “I reject the notion that the United States has evolved into an imperial state, that it is no longer a democracy.” Yet is not a country (and here I paraphrase Greider) that neglects its own interests in order to run the world an empire by definition?

If we are what we are, then we have a problem—actually two. First, we cannot afford global domination. As Greider points out, “the U.S. economic engine is running on empty, borrowing vast sums of capital from abroad every year,” and “the nation as a whole is sliding into dangerous debtor’s dependency.” The twin deficits of the 1980’s (trade and budget) have never gone away; in fact, they are worse than ever. For fiscal year 2009, the federal-budget deficit will surpass one trillion dollars, and it is expected to be as large in 2010. The country continues to pile debt upon debt. Unlike Obama, Greider realizes that we cannot continue to maintain global constabulary forces, wage multiple wars, and engage in nation-building, while simultaneously spending billions at home rebuilding and modernizing our transportation networks, developing new energy sources, and reviving our manufacturing base. We have to choose, but Americans don’t like that. This points to a problem of national character that Greider does not see.

What imperial state in history has ever relinquished its empire as a matter of free choice, instead of being forced to do so by some combination of catastrophic military defeat, demographic exhaustion, and financial collapse? As long as foreigners continue to buy our treasuries, the imperial game will go on. Richard Holbrooke has declared that a stable and democratic Pakistan is vital to U.S. national security; Hillary Clinton, that promoting de-

mocracy is a major aim of U.S. foreign policy; and Bob Gates, that failure in Afghanistan (meaning getting out of there) is not an option. So much for change we can believe in.

Greider dedicates his book to Lawrence Goodwyn, the historian of populism. Greider himself is descended on his mother’s side from Scots-Irish farmers in western Pennsylvania. He is one of those rare reporters who has not been captured by his sources (*i.e.*, corrupted by his proximity to power and money), and he has written about those issues that have always concerned populists: overseas military adventures, banking and the money supply, trade and tariffs, and democratic procedures. His 1989 best seller, *Secrets of the Temple: How the Federal Reserve Runs the Country*, is selling again. His *Who Will Tell the People: The Betrayal of American Democracy* (1992) details the betrayal of the American middle class by a plutocratic elite. In *One World, Ready or Not: The Manic Logic of Global Capitalism* (1997), Greider explains how the fraud of “free trade” is driving down wages and driving out manufacturing. Here is a reversal. In the past, populists, being mostly farmers, benefited from low tariffs; today, being salaried workers, they require protection from the Darwinian “race to the bottom,” the unceasing search by corporations for a cheaper market in labor.

Greider blames NAFTA but also the Federal Reserve, accusing it of “targeting the wages of working people.” But he

never explains how it is doing that. He says it “hardened the value of money and wealth” and inflated the value of financial assets (stocks, bonds, real estate), apparently unaware that it cannot do both. On the contrary, the Fed’s policy has been to soften (inflate) the dollar by pushing interest rates down and flooding the market with liquidity. A more plausible explanation for falling salaries and wages is immigration, both legal and illegal, which coincides exactly with the trend and, for that reason, is backed by both the managerial and rentier classes. A recent study (reported only by Lou Dobbs) concludes that the H-1B guest-worker program has driven down the annual salaries for highly educated workers in the technology sector by six percent.

In 1982, the average wage for a full-time American worker was \$34,199 (in 2006 dollars); 20 years later, in 2002, it had climbed to \$34,861, a \$662 increase! This meager raise was all Americans had to show for 20 years of near-continuous economic growth, a bull market in stocks, and increased productivity resulting from new information technologies. Meanwhile, the richest five percent of Americans have seen their incomes and investments rise quite nicely. This growing maldistribution of wealth has become so marked (reaching or exceeding levels last seen in the late 19th century) that even the beneficiaries have taken note and realized that something has to be done. But that something is merely palliative (e.g., expanded healthcare coverage). The financial oligarchy is even now plotting how to survive the current crisis with its wealth and privileges intact. Greider calls the adaptive policy “strategic repositioning.”

Robert Rubin (Bill Clinton’s secretary of the Treasury and a head honcho at Goldman Sachs and CitiGroup) has founded the Hamilton Project to manage this problem, yet when Greider asks him if anything can be done to arrest the

downward pressure on U.S. wages, he replies, “I guess the answer would be no.” Greider asks economist Alan Blinder if anything can be done to stop the exporting of U.S. manufacturing, and Blinder, annoyed, refers him to “the immutable laws of economics and history.” He asks Nobel Laureate Paul Krugman, who has at least admitted that there is a “dark side to globalization,” what the answer is and hears, “I don’t think there is one.”

Conversations of this stripe have persuaded Greider that only the people can save themselves from the corporatist road to serfdom: “From the birth of our nation, it was always ordinary people, pushing from the bottom against an entrenched status quo, that led to the most momentous changes in American life.” He expects this to happen again. Yet history offers little succor. Throughout our past, conspiratorial elites with self-serving agendas have repeatedly taken the people for a ride. Greider cites the abolition of slavery, but that was effected by presidential decree and military force. The U.S. Constitution itself was the product of a nationalist cabal. Industrialization, massive immigration, intervention in two European wars—not one of these transformative changes happened because the people wanted them. The people seem capable of only one kind of political action: throwing the bums out. In 1980 and 1994, they tossed out the Democrats; in 2006 and 2008, the Republicans. But only once in 40 years have more than one or two percent been bold enough to vote for a third party. As Clyde Wilson observed years ago, “the American people have lost the capacity for self-government.”

Greider says we must reject “the familiar themes of patriotic optimism,” but he cannot resist. “Americans have the capacity to govern themselves.” “Our saving grace lies in the hope for self-correction a functioning democracy can achieve when people make themselves

heard.” “Americans are a pragmatic people; we learn from experience, from the past.” “Americans will postpone immediate gratification and endure hard sacrifices.” “We Americans accomplish great things when we pull together.”

In all these sentences the wish is the father to the thought. Our democracy cannot be both “dysfunctional” and “functioning.” People have to know their history before they can learn from it. The early popularity of the Bush presidency was based on the opposite premise—that Americans would support multiple wars only as long as they were called on neither to fight nor to pay. Recalling the unity of wartime America, *circa* 1942, Greider thinks that what we did then, we can do now, without recognizing how much has changed in both the character and the composition of the people. A fragmented collective, divided against itself, made up of self-seeking individuals and selfish groupings representing every religion and race on the globe, does not constitute a people.

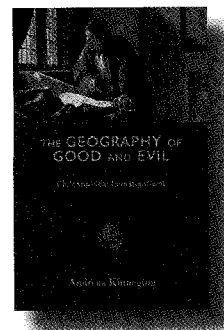
Greider would have done better to call for a radical devolution of power to the states, or even for secession. Once freed from the burdens of empire, the suffocations of a centralized administration, and the inundation of foreigners, some areas of our country might still be capable of self-government and genuine nationhood. Some may reply that separation is unrealistic, yet it is certainly not more so than the expectation that a fictional people will gather themselves up and restore the polity of Jefferson.

Herbert Arthur Scott Trask, an historian, lives and writes in the Missouri River hill country west of St. Louis.



Cicero's Legacy

by Matthew A. Roberts



The Geography of Good and Evil:

Philosophical Investigations

by Andreas Kinneging

Wilmington, DE: ISI Books

300 pp., \$28.00

ONCE A BELIEVER in the blessings of modernity and classical liberalism, Dutch philosopher Andreas Kinneging now considers himself a “convert” to traditional thinking. He believes that the Enlightenment and Romanticism have brought “decline and deterioration, instead of progress and improvement.” Today, public discourse, directed by shallow pragmatists, reveals an historically illiterate ruling class. “Because we no longer consult our ancestors,” he notes, “our thinking in ethics and law has become perfunctory and superficial.” Many of our current problems stem from the Enlightenment; these include a “form of hubris,” against which can be pitted conservatism, “a conscious defense of the Christian and classical legacies.” At the heart of this conservatism lies the conviction that one’s happiness and freedom mostly depend “on a disposition achieved by an inner struggle against all sorts of primary impulses that lead him astray.” To curb these inclinations, Enlightenment thinking can offer only the state, public opinion, and modern education, all of which seem to have failed. Conservatism, by returning to time-tested ways, can correct these failings. Although Kinneging’s enthusiasm is welcome, here in the United States conservatism has

largely failed as a bulwark to Enlightenment thinking. In fact, through the influence of neoconservatives, Enlightenment platitudes are repackaged and peddled to the public as “conservative.”

Kinneging argues for a synthesis of the classical cardinal virtues (wisdom, justice, courage, and temperance) and the Christian virtues of faith, hope, and love. Whereas the classical virtues are oriented toward the public domain, Christian virtues, he notes, are concerned with the private one. Combined, the two cover most aspects of our lives.

In the most promising part of his book, Kinneging presents a lengthy discussion of the various virtues and their subsets, and teases nuances from them. Of the ancient virtues, only tolerance, he notes, is respected today, but respect for it is nominal, and it is largely misunderstood and mistaken for indifference. *Tolerare* in Latin means “to endure”; and *tolerance* actually means “putting up with those of whom and that of which we disapprove when we are in a position to change the situation.” Regarding the virtue of loyalty, Kinneging laments that people today regard partiality as injustice and think that “family ties, bonds of friendship, and common citizenship are on principle no grounds for discrimination.” In a traditional understanding of loyalty, we have the primary “obligation to help those belonging to ‘us.’”

Part of the path to recovery, Kinneging argues, is the recognition of the family, not

the individual, as the foundation of society. Yet marriage, the central institution of the family, is in decline. We largely view marriage as being contractual in nature. Kinneging notes that if marriage is only a contract, there are no grounds to discriminate against homosexual or polygamous marriages. In addition, the Romantics have taught us to view romantic love as the basis of marriage. But Kinneging does not offer an alternative, more realistic understanding of marriage. (The Latin *mari-tare*, whence we derive the word *marriage*, means both to marry and to impregnate.)

Unfortunately, Kinneging’s treatment of the decline of Europe includes almost no mention of Third World immigration, which, unchecked, must irrevocably alter Europe’s demographics and traditions. And he barely discusses classical natural law. Cicero, the inspiration for Kinneging’s conservative conversion, noted that natural law in a certain sense is universal, the “mind of God,” but that it manifests itself in the *mos maiorum* (ancestral tradition) of different peoples. Natural law demands greater obligations to kith and kin, thus undercutting the misguided obligations of Enlightenment egalitarianism.

While Kinneging’s book is thought-provoking, as a critique of what has become of our civilization in the last few centuries, it falls short of Thomas Fleming’s *Morality of Everyday Life*.

Matthew A. Roberts writes
from Kansas City, Missouri.

STENDAHL BEGINS his peculiar autobiography, *The Life of Henry Brulard*, with his alter ego standing at the summit of the Janiculum Hill, surveying the city of Rome, west to east. It is October 16, 1832, and Brulard faces his *cinquantaine* in three months. Fifty years, he thinks! But Raphael's *Transfiguration* has been admired for 250 years already, and better men than he have been dead for centuries. From the Gianicolo he can pick out Castel Gandolfo, the Villa Aldobrandini, and the white form of Castel San Pietro. At his feet below the slope lie orange trees planted by the Capuchins. Beyond the Tiber, he spies the Priory of Malta and the Pyramid of Cestius; at a greater distance, Santa Maria Maggiore and the long lines of the Palazzo di Monte Cavallo.

All of Rome, ancient and modern, from the former Appian Way with the ruins of its tombs and its aqueducts as far as the magnificent Garden of Pincio built by the French, spreads itself in view.

Lost in reverie, Brulard finds the modern metropolis supplanted in mind by the ancient city and its historical memories. "This place is unique in the world," he tells himself.

Not only has Rome, the seat of the greatest empire the world ever saw, been a dead empire for 1,500 years, but she has, for many centuries now, stood as the symbol of and monument to all dead empires, almost for mortality itself. Yet Rome lives, and her empires live within her, because they are dead, and therefore beyond the hand of time, all revenge and revision, at peace with history. Stendahl seems not to have grasped the fact on earlier visits to Rome, owing in part to his youthful antipathy to the "dead" religion that also has its seat there; but his historical imagination was too strong to allow him to overlook it forever, and

his highly eccentric but enormously fascinating *Walks in Rome* is a result of his eventual enlightenment.

Modern Rome, so marvelously alive today, is the ancient empire's reward, as sainthood for the soul in Heaven is reward for a well-lived life in the body. Everyone who reads and loves history knows that one of its delights is that, in history, we have the whole story, we know how past finite events came out. More importantly still, perhaps, this story lies beyond the pain of partisanship, of having a horse of one's own in the race. That, indeed, is why we can love history. Only liberals, socialists, atheists, and other unhappy people have an ax to grind in reading history; while, for healthy people, a "dead" city like Rome is a profoundly relaxing and comfortable place which we are at leave to enjoy on its own terms and where, as Michel Crouzet has written, "the tourist must become an artist." Rome, like the rest of Italy, is threatened by invasion from the Third World, that is true; but Italy has never had a clear ethnic or racial identity, as England had until recently and France to a lesser degree had also—a fact well known to, and accepted by, the Italian nationalists of the 19th century, Giuseppe Verdi included.

The French empire, a flimsy modern arrangement of almost ludicrously short duration by comparison with her Roman predecessor, nevertheless has far to travel before making her own escape from history. The shipwreck remains, the flotsam

constantly stirred by historical conflicts, passions, hatreds, and prejudices, all very much in the present and all dangerously alive. Jean Raspail's *The Camp of the Saints*, a fictional *tour de force* about the invasion of France by hordes of refugees arriving on a fleet of rusting hulks from India, owes its power to being at once a futuristic and a realistic story; the novel was published almost four decades ago now. Today, France has more Muslims than any other country in Europe. The mass intrusion of immigrants from its former colonies and elsewhere strains the historic French identity, threatens the classic French culture, overburdens the national budget, and incites religious and social conflict throughout France, including rioting in the ethnic *banlieue* and *faubourgs* that ring the big French cities, those of the capital especially.

My wife and I had last visited Paris three years ago, *en route* to and from northeastern France. We returned three months ago, in the fall of 2009, and put up for a week in a local hotel in the eighth *arrondissement*, at a close distance from the Gare St. Lazare. I had not spent so long in town since my first visit in 1972, and recent reports from friends abroad had not been encouraging. We feared the worst; but we did not find it.

It is possible that what follows is a wholly personal and quite superficial impression. I am acquainted with one Frenchman, a resident of the Left Bank with whom I agree on absolutely every



Three Cities, Three Empires

matter of importance (politics, food, and drink), who would (and probably will) be the first to contradict it. Anyway, my impression is this: Paris—Paris *centre*, I mean—seems substantially to have cheated its historical fate as the former center of a fallen empire, no matter the condition of the rest of France, its own suburbs included. In 1972, the place had appealed to me as shabby, the streets dirty, the *citoyens* polite but not friendly, the women lacking in the proverbial *chic* that every Frenchwoman is supposed to possess. They were not even, I thought, particularly attractive, but vaguely unhealthy and unhappy looking. In retrospect, I suspect the Paris of 40 years ago had not fully recovered from the war: London, when I lived there in the early 60's, had the same aspect, only more so.

Revisiting Paris in 2009, I felt a delight and relief that acquired in the course of the week the force of a juggernaut that nearly bowled me over in the street among the café tables and book and sheet-music stands. Compared with London, New York, even Rome, the Paris of today retains, for me at least, its unparalleled urbanity. Architecturally speaking, Paris is a 19th-century town, and Parisian urbanity is a species of the urbanity of the *haute bourgeoisie* of that era. (On the trip, I read *La Dame aux camélias*, in French, and found the Paris of Dumas fils to be perfectly recognizable in the present day.) The wealthy bourgeois insisted upon, and was attentive to, detail, precision, and completeness, not just abundance and superfluity. This attentiveness is a part of civilization, and it continues to prevail in the daily life of Paris in the 21st century: in the markets, the shops, the hotels, the restaurants, the *brasseries*, bistros, and bars. The city throngs with lovely women, well dressed and elegant even in relatively casual attire. There is the bourgeois taste for spaciousness in Napoleon III's plan for the capital that has hardly been compromised in a century and a half; the streets, save in a few neighborhoods, are clean; the his-

toric buildings and monuments, carefully preserved and displayed to effect and with taste. I do not believe that Napoleon, on the whole, would be disappointed by Paris could he return there today. So far, the headscarves have not won in Paris (we saw surprisingly few), and Paris today remains very much a French city.

The established, though recently challenged, explanation for the collapse of the Roman Empire is that the barbarians from the north and east, having invaded and settled within its boundaries, in time destroyed the empire from within. In the case of France and Great Britain, the imperial nation formally surrendered her empire, only to discover that the empire refused to surrender her. The results to both countries are innumerable, but of all these the most dramatic and dreadful is the fate of London Town—the home of Boadicea, the outpost of Caesar, the capital of Elizabeth I, Charles I, the Georges, Queen Victoria, and Edward VII—in the 21st century.

My wife and I took the Eurostar from Gare du Nord in Paris, and until I stepped from the train onto the platform at St. Pancras Station I had not set foot in England for 47 years, except to change planes at Heathrow. We stayed at a small hotel at Inverness Terrace north of the Bayswater Road, a 15-minute walk from Portsea Place, where I lived for a year with my family in the 1960's. For the first 12 hours of our stay, we heard hardly a word of English spoken in what I remembered as an upper-middle-class neighborhood inhabited by Englishwomen in tweeds taking their dogs for a run in Hyde Park, and men with rolled umbrellas catching buses and taxis to work in the City, where my own grandfather worked. Today, the love-

ly row houses are flophouses for Turkish immigrants, and the neighborhood pubs have been supplanted by Third World restaurants serving poor imitations of exotic fare. Tony Blair has bought a townhouse on Connaught Square, round the corner from Portsea Row, but that was small compensation for the Arab cafés on the Edgware Road whose sidewalk tables were mounted with three-foot-tall hoo-kahs (not the feminine sort); the burqas and headscarves; the Oriental markets; and the pathos of the stray red-faced Britisher in his tailored suit and plaid cap, gripping his umbrella and briefcase as he dashed round the Marble Arch with his head down, lost in a sea of dusky faces and looking as if he'd just stepped from Wells' time machine.

I was devastated. We had seen nothing remotely to compare with this in Paris. London has lost its urbanity along with its identity, save in the best neighborhoods—the City, West End, Westminster, Belgravia, Knightsbridge, Mayfair; we attended Mass at Farm Street Church near Berkeley Square, where Evelyn Waugh had been converted and married. In these last redoubts, the old town lives on. Here London is still recognizable, despite the madding crowds of Asians (east and west) and of Continental tourists, beneficiaries of the exchange rates, crowding its narrow sidewalks and its monuments. Outside the gates of Buckingham Palace, we observed a Pakistani photographing his small boy waving the Paki flag in front of a sentry box. I looked round for a big blue policeman nearby, hoping to see the pair of them arrested.

God save the Queen! But for how long? History is not through with the British Empire, yet. ♦

Thomas Fleming • Clyde Wilson • Paul Craig Roberts
 James Buchanan • Justin Raimondo • William Murchison

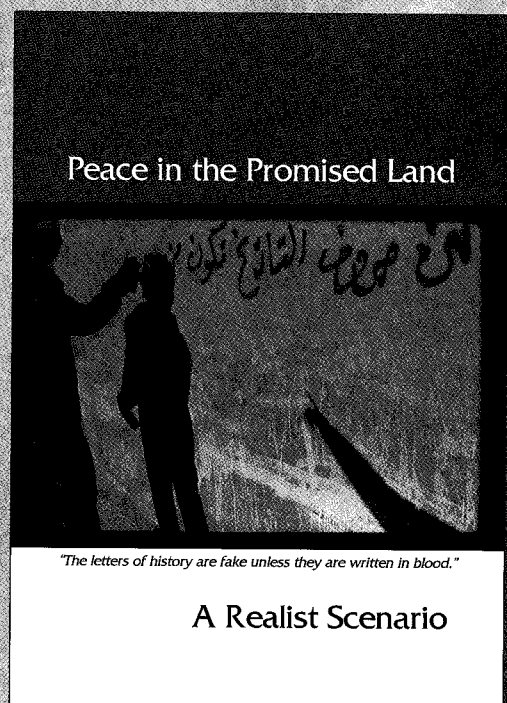
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A Hard Habit to Break

ON FRIDAY, December 18, 2009, some lucky person became the first motorist in over 35 years to travel a two-block stretch of Main Street in Rockford, Illinois. The ride must have lasted all of 60 seconds—perhaps 90, if he slowed down to view the handful of restaurants and storefronts that had, until a few months before, been visible only on foot.

This is the way the mall ends: not with a crowd, but a Honda. Since 1975, the two blocks of Main Street between Mulberry on the north and Elm on the south have been a pedestrian mall, visited each year by a dwindling number of shoppers and diners. Originally, West State Street, which intersects Main in between the two blocks, was closed off as well, but by January 1984, West State was reopened. The pedestrian mall had failed.

In reality, the mall had failed before the project even began. This stretch of Rockford's downtown, the *Rockford Register Star* noted on June 15, 2009, "had been the retail center of the city since the late 1800s when it featured blacksmith, clothing, furniture and shoe stores." Postcards and photos from the 1890's through the 1950's show a bustling downtown, with buggies, then streetcars, then automobiles stopping to let crowds of shoppers cross the street.

But the decline of downtown retail began in the late 1960's, and by the time ground was broken for the mall in 1974, the writing was on the wall. CherryVale Mall, the Rockford area's first ma-

jor suburban shopping mall, had opened in 1973, and the shoppers of decades past had become consumers who would rather drive miles southeast of town to park on a sea of asphalt, so that they could walk as far to the entrance of CherryVale as they would if they had traversed the entire Main and State shopping district.

"There were 48 retailers, restaurants and salons on the mall when it opened in 1975," the *Register Star* reported. By November 1977, Rockford aldermen considered writing off the \$1.2 million project as a loss.

J.C. Penney, D.J. Stewart & Co., Ruth D. Clark women's clothing, Pin Ball Wizard, Fannie May Candy, Stuckey's men's clothing, Tom Harmer Athletic Equipment, Rowland's Jewelers, Barker's Shoes and the Akropolis Restaurant, among others, had all moved out or closed by 1980.

Today, "A men's clothing store and an office supply are the only two retailers of the late 1970s left."

Did the mall kill downtown, or was it simply the final nail in the coffin? Rockfordians have debated that for years. My money is on the latter, but if that is right, then the reopening of Main Street—a project first estimated at \$1.7 million, then \$1.9 million, and finally topping out at \$2.45 million—is unlikely to have much effect. For a few weeks, maybe a month,

some Rockfordians will make their way through the snow and the slush to drive those two blocks for the sheer novelty of the experience, but by spring pedestrians will be able to cross in the middle of the block without first looking both ways.

Part of the problem is that the system of one-way streets designed to funnel traffic around the pedestrian mall remains in place. To get to Main and Mulberry or to Main and Elm, you have to make an effort. Three-and-a-half decades of habit is hard to break—and for most Rockfordians, the incentive for breaking it simply does not exist.

Meanwhile, less than a mile and a half up North Main, the same city leaders who tore up the pedestrian mall seem determined to repeat, *mutatis mutandis*, the mistake their forebears made downtown. The North End retail district, on North Main between Myott on the south and Auburn on the north, has struggled for years, and the Powers That Be have determined that the solution is a massive roundabout at the intersection of North Main and Auburn. The roundabout, they argue, will ease the flow of traffic through the intersection, and thus (almost as if by magic) attract more cars, whose drivers will feel compelled (why, no one can quite say) to patronize the businesses and restaurants of the North End.

Of course, to do so, they will have to turn off of Main Street and find their way to a lot behind the storefronts, since there is no parking on this stretch of North Main.

What no one seems to have considered, at either end of Main Street, is that the natural clientele for a small shopping district are those who live within walking distance. And the walking distance of the average Rockfordian is not that much different from that of the average American—about 20 feet, from the front door to the garage and back again.

Unless, of course, he's parked at the mall. ♦

The Lord's Shepherd

by Michael McMahon

WE HAD KNOWN it was a "white road" when we had found it on the map, but when my wife and I got to the start of it, we hesitated. There was a sign at the junction, and it made us stop and think: RD 103 EN LACUNE CIRCULATION DANGEREUSE ET DÉCONSEILLÉE.

En lacune wasn't a phrase either of us had come across, and we had left our French-English dictionary back in England. I did, however, have a Latin-English one back in the tent. It wasn't there because I had expected to meet ancient Romans—though a couple of thousand years ago, we might well have come across a few in the Alpes de Haute-Provence. The book was a stowaway; it had found its way into one of my hastily packed bags. When I looked up *lacuna* later, I found that the reason that we use it to describe a place where something is missing in a manuscript is that the word's primary meaning is "a hole." By then, though, we had worked this out for ourselves, for the RD 103 has more holes than surface, and what surface it has is covered with stones, rocks, bigger stones, bigger rocks, and—at the point at which we decided our car wouldn't take any more—boulders. Driving up that road had indeed been "dangerous," and we could see why the sign advised against it.

The drive had, however, been spectacular. The RD 103 followed the river, the river followed a gorge, and the gorge narrowed to a cleft between two tall cliffs. Beyond it, the valley opened out, and the road rose steeply, crossed by runnels made by spring water falling from the mountainsides above. On foot now, we unfolded the local map. We were amused to notice that one of the springs had a name: Source de Pisse Vache. We

didn't need a dictionary to work that out. Another detail we had missed when we planned our expedition was that the place names ahead were all followed by the word *Ruines*. The valley we were exploring had been abandoned. We were in the definitive back of beyond.

WHICH IS WHY, when we looked up after drinking at a spring, we were surprised to find ourselves facing a man, and shocked when we saw that he was carrying a four-inch, open-bladed Opinel pen knife—though our alarm did subside a little when we saw that, in his other hand, he was holding a lettuce. He must have come to the spring in order to wash it. But what on earth was he doing all the way up here? He stood in silence, waiting for us to speak. He was tanned, unshaven, and wearing a ragged polo shirt, shorts, and flip-flops that were at least two sizes too big for his feet. "Bonjour!" I said.

He returned the greeting, and resumed his silence. For want of something to say, I asked him how to find the path to the top. "Suivez moi!" he replied, and disappeared behind a pile of stones that had once been a wall.

We followed, and found ourselves standing in front of an old caravan. If caravans were marked on maps, I thought, the name of this one would surely be followed by the word *Ruines*. It sagged on its chassis, and its door hung open, revealing a jumble of clothes, boots, tools, and packets and tins of food within. Heaven only knows how he'd got it there. Outside it was a rickety wooden table, on which there were a stack of disposable plastic beakers that had clearly been reused (but not rewashed) many times, two tired-looking carrots, and a tin plate. He put

the lettuce on the plate, and a swarm of flies settled on it.

"*Vous etes de quelle pays?*" he asked.

"England," I replied.

"Ah," he said. "What ees *mouches* in Eenglish?"

"It's 'flies,'" I replied, and more appeared, as if the word had summoned them. My wife caught my eye and raised hers to a branch in the tree that shaded the caravan. There was a flypaper hanging from it, but it had only caught two, and, from the look of them, quite some time ago.

He reached through the door of the caravan and pulled out a bottle of Pastis. "*Un apéritif?*" he asked. I looked at my watch. It was only 11 o'clock, but it seemed rude to refuse. He took the top three beakers from the stack and inspected them by holding them up to the sun. They did not sparkle. He set one aside, then picked it up again when he found the next even dirtier. He poured a good slug into each and topped them up with spring water. As we stood there, nursing our drinks, I asked him whether he was on holiday. It would have been rude to ask if he had fled the cruel world after a crisis, which is what I was thinking.

"Non," he replied, and made another stab at English. "I am *berger*," he said. "What is *berger*?"

"Ah," I replied. "A 'shepherd'!"

He pointed to the opposite hillside. "These—are—my—sheep. I—have—nine—hundred!"

I began to think of him in a different light.

"I live here three months each year," he continued, more confidently. We followed his eyes as they turned to the caravan. "Three months is a long time," he

said. The words *cabin fever* began to form in my mind.

We raised our glasses, toasted each other, and it was time to go. He led us just up the hill to the track. Parked beside it was an ancient Citroen, looking every bit as out of place as the caravan—more so, indeed, for across its bonnet was a mes-

sage stenciled in huge white letters: “*Lisez L’Evangile!*”—“Read the Gospel!”

“I see you are a Christian,” I said.

“*Bien sur!*” he replied. “*Et vous?*”

“Yes, indeed.”

Then, breaking into a smile that set his eyes sparkling, he said: “The Lord is my shepp-ed; I shall not want. Psaume

twenty-three! God—bless—you!”

“I was a stranger, and you welcomed me,” I replied. “Matthew, twenty-five. God bless *you!*”

Michael McMahon is the author of Saints: The Art, the History, the Inspiration (Spruce).



Michael McMahon

Of Genes, Vowels, and Violence

by F.W. Brownlow

WHY DO THE BRITISH speak English and not a variety of Welsh? Philip Jenkins, having fallen under the sway of a Harvard medieval historian, Michael McCormick, believes it is because the invading Germans of the fifth and sixth centuries killed all the Celtic-speaking male Britons in what is now England. (See "Once There Was a War," *Breaking Glass*, November 2009.) The evidence offered for this hypothesis is the rhetoric of a sixth-century Welsh cleric, Gildas, backed up by a similarity in the Y-chromosomes of Englishmen and Frisians. And why is this recondite argument being aired in the pages of *Chronicles*? Because Mr. Jenkins thinks that softy, left-liberal historians "invent comfortable fictions to justify their political ideologies," and that it is time someone told the unpleasant truth, not just about the English, but about war, barbarians in general, and their influence on culture.

Mr. Jenkins (whose name, I notice, is Welsh) has opted for an uncomfortable fiction from Harvard, but it is a fiction nonetheless.

First, Gildas does not tell us that "a million Romano-British men alive in 400 vanished without genetic trace." He tells us that towns were wrecked, that some people were killed and others emigrated, but there is no evidence in Gildas's vague and overheated rhetoric for what we would describe as a genocidal massacre. As for the genetic evidence, the real story is a much more interesting one. If Stephen Oppenheimer, a geneticist at Oxford, is right—and the consensus seems to be that he is—the population of the British Isles (English, Irish, Scots, Welsh, Cornish, Manx, *und so weiter*) is, genetically speaking, remarkably homo-

geneous. It consists mostly of a basic, resident population overlaid by a small minority of invading Celts, Romans, Saxons, Vikings, and Normans; and, as one would expect, the invaders' presence is smallest in Ireland and Wales, 12 percent and 20 percent, respectively.

There was a dramatic illustration of the basic truth of this finding a decade or so ago when another Oxford geneticist, having extracted the DNA of Cheddar Man, the oldest complete human remains found in Britain, went looking for it in the modern population of Cheddar. To everyone's surprise and amusement, he found it, too, coming up with three matches. One of them was a history teacher in a nearby grammar school, who had the interesting experience of being told that he came of 10,000-year-old Neolithic stock. His wife is reported as saying, "Maybe this explains why he likes his steaks rare."

The implication is that most of us modern Brits, though we like to think of ourselves as Anglo-Saxons, Normans, Welsh, Irish, *etc.*, are actually descended from the Neolithic people who built such places as Avebury, Stonehenge, and Brú na Bóinne. This fact explains the otherwise puzzling behavior of the villagers of Uffington, Oxfordshire (formerly Berkshire), who, every seven years or so until the 20th century, held a special holiday, the "Scouring of the White Horse," to clean up a great white horse carved into the hill above them. In the rest of England, no one knew how old the monument was, nor exactly what it represented. Was it a horse? A dragon? A dog? A deer? Meanwhile, the Uffingtonians, who knew exactly what it was—if anyone in Oxford or London had bothered to ask them—had been "scouring the horse"

time out of mind, as one would expect if their ancestors had made it. Carbon dating now gives the horse an age of at least 3,000 years, putting it well before the arrival of the Celts, let alone Mr. Jenkins' murdering Saxons.

These findings have changed completely not only Mr. Jenkins' tale of genocide but the whole story of the British people as we Brits were taught it in school. Instead of a tale of waves of burly, progressive immigrants driving the backward indigenes into the western fringes of Cornwall and Wales, we have an emerging, but so far unwritten, story of a long-suffering, stationary native population acquiring well-armed new overlords from time to time. What the invading Germans drove out of southern Britain wasn't the native population but their Celtic warrior-aristocrat overlords, whose first representatives had begun to arrive about 800 years earlier. As for the scale of such invasions: Only the Romans invaded with large professional armies whom they proceeded to install in purpose-built garrison towns to police their new province—princes, peasants, and all. Other invasions were more modest affairs. After all, what do we think of when we imagine an Anglo-Saxon invasion? Something like D-Day with long ships? In a rare moment of precision, Gildas tells us that the Anglo-Saxons initially came in three boatloads. How many warriors is that? About 150 at most? In any case, Germanic people were not newcomers to Britain in the mid-fifth century. Their raids along the east coast began in Roman times, and it is pretty certain, too, that Germanic settlers from the European mainland—Frisians, in particular—had begun arriving in eastern Britain long before the first shiploads of warriors came.

There was already a Germanic presence in the eastern part of England in the time of the British warrior-kings.

So why are we speaking English? For that matter, why is anyone speaking Welsh? What happened to the language of the people who built Stonehenge, whose posterity are still milling about the malls of Britain? The answer is that no one really knows. Conquest can certainly be a contributory cause of linguistic change, but it is not the determining one, as we know from later history. A couple of hundred years after the Anglo-Saxons had established themselves in what is now England and southern Scotland, the Viking raids began. The Vikings, who really were a spectacularly violent crowd of people, established kingdoms in Ireland, western Scotland, eastern England, and Normandy, yet in no case did their language take hold. The great clan of MacDonald, lords of the isles until the 16th century, came of partly Viking ancestry; but they spoke Gaelic, like their cousins in Ireland. In England, the Vikings governed much of the country for 200 years, and all of it for 25 years. They left their linguistic signature upon place names ending in *-by* instead of *-burgh*, but otherwise had almost no effect on English except for the odd fact that their pronouns displaced the Anglo-Saxons'. Then in 1066 the Normans came, took over the country, and expropriated the Anglo-Saxons just as the Anglo-Saxons had expropriated the Celts, now called the Welsh. For nearly 300 years Norman French was the language of the court and of government. If conquest and governance determine language, we should now be speaking French. But for reasons no one can explain satisfactorily, by about 1360 English had come back, not just as the language of a dispossessed, enslaved, and illiterate peasantry, but as the language of government, the law courts, and literature.

Philologists have scratched their heads over this problem, and the best explana-

tion they can come up with is that English, for some reason, is a "killer" language, which is to say that wherever it goes, it drives out other languages. There is no apparent reason why the Anglo-Saxons—who, like the Vikings in Normandy, were a relatively small group of warriors who married the female kin of the resident proprietors whom they dispossessed—should not have adopted the language of their wives, tenants, children, and children's nurses. Instead, the wives, tenants, children, and nurses adopted the Anglo-Saxons' language, in the process importing some distinctively Brythonic syntax into English, so that we now say such peculiar things—by Germanic standards—as "Did you see what she's doing to the cat?"

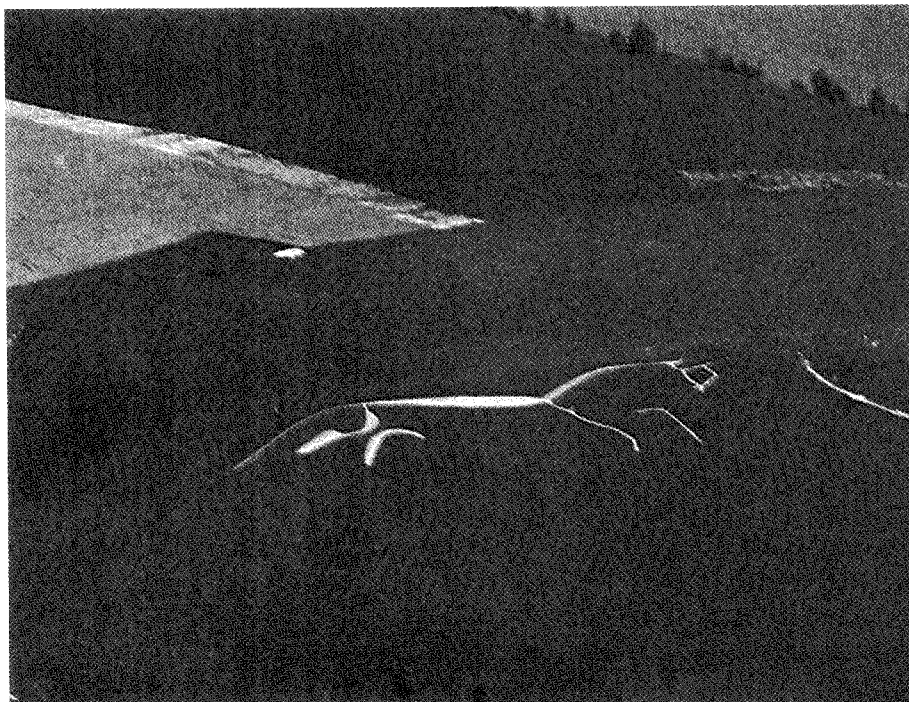
Only on the western fringes, where there were no English speakers, could Welsh and Gaelic hold on; and once the Welsh, the Cornish, the Manx, and the Scottish highlanders began to mingle with the English, their own local languages began to fade. Cornish went in the 18th century. The last Manx speaker died 35 years ago. Gaelic is still spoken in the Western Isles of Scotland, but it is very

much a local tongue.

So notorious is the tendency of English to take over that the Irish, the Welsh, the Scots, and the Manx—as well as the French Canadians—have all resorted to various kinds of legal compulsion in the attempt, so far vain, to maintain or restore their vanquished languages as languages of choice for all transactions. A similar battle is being fought in the United States between English and Spanish, and it will be interesting to see whether, with the weight of the federal government's Anglophobia (or autophobia?) behind it, Spanish will hold its own.

Certainly, people died in the Anglo-Saxon conquest of southern England. They also died in the Celtic, Roman, Viking, and Norman conquests; they died in the intra-Celtic, intra-Anglo-Saxon battles, as well. But we have no reason to believe that those deaths had a determining influence on the way people spoke.

F.W. Brownlow, the Gwen and Allen Smith Professor of English at Mt. Holyoke College, has written books on Shakespeare and Robert Southwell and edited John Skelton's The Book of the Laurel (1991).



OVER THE PAST DECADE, climate change has been a permanent fixture in the headlines, and its implications are frightening. Depending on whom you believe, the earth might be on the verge of a warming trend that could devastate much of human civilization. If this is even partially true, we might need to consider radical solutions, even some kind of authoritarian global socialism.

As I am not a climate scientist, I felt like a spectator in this debate, trying to read arguments on both sides critically. And then, last year, we had Climategate, the exposure of confidential e-mails by global-warming activists who showed themselves so desperate to silence any rival voices that they would suppress inconvenient evidence. And that was when I decided that actually, as an historian, I could make a valid contribution to the debate—rather more valid, in fact, than some of the scientists involved. Because so much of what they claim assumes an historical vision that is, simply, wrong.

Let me begin with the definition of terms. However often you see the phrase, the problem we face is not “climate change.” Climates change all the time, and saying you oppose that fact is rather like proclaiming yourself against geological change. If you want to see a world without climate change, there is one conveniently within sight, and we call it the Moon.

Nor, necessarily, is global warming as simple and apocalyptic an issue as sometimes appears. We have in recent years framed the problem as a foolish dichotomy: Either you believe in global warming, or you do not, and if you do, then you accept all the consequences—massive government intervention, control of carbon emissions, *etc.* In fact, another position is possible. You can believe in current global warming, as I do, and worry about its consequences, but you do not have to believe in the role posited for human intervention in the process.

And that brings me to the role of history. According to the scientists involved in Climategate, global temperatures had been relatively constant throughout the past few millennia, and only in very recent times had they begun to soar. The long-term graph, therefore, resembled a hockey stick, flat along the base and sharply curved at the end. Hockeystickism is so important ideologically because it suggests that we are presently living through changes that are unprecedented in all history. Some new factor must be involved, and the only candidate is human misbehavior. Humans caused the problem, and humans must fix it by changing their behavior—and in the process, all their social and political arrangements. And as we are told, only expert climate scientists are qualified to pronounce on these matters.

The problem here is that the hockey stick just does not work, and most of the scandalous passages in the leaked e-mails dealt with attempts to conceal that fact. Yes, today, temperatures probably are climbing, and it is quite possible that—as we are told—the world was warmer over the past decade than at any point “since records began.” But reliable record-keeping began only in the 1850’s, which hardly counts as the mists of antiquity. If we go back much further—and climate change occurs over long periods—we can find planetary conditions very much like what we are facing now and in the imminent future. And if that is true, then

modern-day humans have not launched the present crisis.

Anyone who knows anything about global history realizes that through the Middle Ages, roughly between 800 and 1200, the world was a very warm place. Although the details are hard to quantify, we can demonstrate this by many changes in society, agriculture, and economic life that could only have occurred in a significantly warmer world. We know for instance that the Vikings sailed ice-free seas to Greenland and Labrador. English regions like Gloucestershire turned out respectable wines of a kind that would not be possible at those latitudes today. Warmer climates made possible the vast expansion of cultivation across Europe and Asia. Historians know, in short, that a Medieval Warm Period existed, a large bump in the temperature graph that makes nonsense of the hockey stick, and of most current theories of global warming.

Almost certainly, that particular warming cycle resulted from the effects of fluctuating sunspot activity, as did the subsequent waves of cooling that preceded our own age. And logically, that is the causal factor to which we should look to explain our changing current situation.

Global warming, in other words, is something that happens on our planet from time to time, and we have to live with its consequences. But we don’t have to abandon our freedoms, our national independence, and all the fruits of Western political culture. ♦



An Inconvenient History



Bonkers in Space

TARKOVSKY'S *SOLARIS* came out in 1972, which was the year I'd left Russia. It was not until a quarter of a century later that I watched the long and quaint film, and was strangely affected by it. I had always thought that nothing on the screen, if it was any good at all, could not be scribbled in a book or put on in the theater, and *Solaris*, based on a novel by Stanislaw Lem, was a case in point.

Basically, several men stuck in a space station—it could easily have been a desert island, or an English country house, or a commodious elevator—have hallucinations, or visions, based on their lives. Well, that's pretty much what imaginative literature has been all about since the beginning of time, and the film made this point very persuasively, I thought. I was myself at a weird juncture when I saw it, and all the roads stretching out before me seemed to lead to the past.

The film's protagonists' hallucinations, or visions, could only be as interesting to the audience, of course, as the lives that had prompted them. They had to be consistent with their whole personalities, because otherwise this would not have been literature—or film, or theater—but what the Italians so engagingly call *casino*, meaning bedlam, funny farm, a day in the nuthouse. As it happens, recently I came upon the 2002 remake of the film by somebody called Steven Soderbergh, and let me tell you: *Che casino!*

Now, I'm more of a misanthrope than I is a racist. As a Moscow friend of mine

exclaimed on entering a pub in Belgravia where white young noisy drunks were watching football, "God, I never knew I hated the whites as much as I hate the blacks!" But the crazy thing about the Soderbergh remake was that even as the opening credits were rolling, I guessed that one of the people marooned in interstellar space would be black. Never figured, though, that she'd be a woman, and ugly as a frog at that.

Forget that it's all from a book by a Polish author. Why couldn't a Polack have thought of writing a Negro into his novel? He could, so I have no trouble with that. And forget that it was meant to be a bunch of menfolk stuck in that disused mineshaft of a space station. Couldn't the Polack, with his knowledge of the Upper Silesian Basin, have heard the story of at least one female coal miner and been taken by it, with the result that the ugly frog later popped up in *Solaris*—all black with anthracite dust, incidentally? He could, so I have no serious trouble with that, either. But why? That's what infuriates me. Why? Why?

Why should the heroine of the new Disney film about a princess, which opened in London at the end of January, be black? Think fairy tales, and if that's bonkers enough for you, go right ahead. I prefer to think of the de Guermantes' salon in Proust, remember?

The Guermantes were not only endowed with an exquisite qual-

ity of flesh, of hair, of transparency of gaze, but had a way of holding themselves, of walking, of bowing, of looking at one before they shook one's hand, of shaking hands, which made them as different in all these respects from an ordinary member of fashionable society as he in turn was from a peasant in a smock.

As with the *Solaris* remake, *The Princess and the Frog's* problem is not so much of plausibility as of substance. The title of princess can only belong to the wife or a female descendant of a prince (from Latin *princeps*), who, like all noblemen, was originally a warlord, *primus inter pares* and the first (*Fürst* is "prince" in German, in imitation of the Latin word) to grab hold (*capere*, to take) of something in battle, such as the scruff of an enemy's neck, a flagstaff, a hillside. Now, I see no reason why a warlord must be a honky, but the misanthrope in me recoils violently at the thought of interracial romance, whose putative issue is the princess. We've all read *Othello* and remember how things ended.

Or else the princess's mother was a Negress, too, but that smacks of racism. Even daring Soderbergh didn't have the gall to man Lem's space station with an all-female or all-black crew, so how can Disney, even given Old Walt's famous equanimity and good humor in the face of rapid social and racial change, claim that all the world's a stage with everybody in blackface?

And what about the frog? I sure hope it isn't black, like the frog in *Solaris*, or else officers of the Metropolitan Police Race Relations Rapid Response Unit will arrive to shut down the London premiere before the little charmer has croaked out a single G-rated F-word. ♦

Little Bitty Pretty One

by Janet Scott Barlow

THE TELEVISION SCREEN shows five-year-old Tara being awakened from a sound sleep at 6 A.M. She has a beauty pageant to get ready for. To shake off her sluggishness she is given a carb-rich donut and some caffeine-loaded Mountain Dew.

After “breakfast” Tara is dressed in a two-piece bathing suit and taken to a makeshift tent, where she endures a spray-on tan. After that, it is, as her mother says, “magic time.” Powder is applied to Tara’s face, along with rouge, lipstick, lip gloss, eyeshadow, and false eyelashes. She holds out her tiny hands for tiny fake fingernails. Glitter cream is rubbed on her arms and legs. Hair rollers are removed (Tara slept the night in them), and her hair is worked into a fussy up-do, one made even more elaborate by the addition of a large, curly hairpiece. Now come the earrings, always color-coordinated and sparkling. (Tara does not yet compete wearing a “flipper,” a set of adult-size teeth that fit over a girl’s baby teeth. The use of a flipper changes a child’s look profoundly. The effect is unnatural to the point of creepiness.)

Finally, it’s time for the dress. Pageant dresses are usually made in day-glo colors—the better to bring out a girl’s tan—and have rows and rows of stiffened tulle, along with endless sequins, beads, and even feathers.

Tara is now pageant-ready. While Tara has endured a lot to get to this point, so has her mother. Throughout the process, Tara slapped at her mom, pinched her, talked back, and had many of what her mother helplessly called “diva moments.”

Tara’s is not the only captivating story to be caught on televised pageant shows. There is the chiropractor father who

gives his six-year-old daughter an “adjustment” before she goes onstage, saying, “When the body and the brain are functioning properly, she’s at her best potential to express her inner beauty.”

On another night, we have the confident mother who has entered her two-year-old son, Hunter, in the boys’ competition. (Yes, there are boys’ competitions.) “I don’t consider myself a pageant mom,” she says, “because I have a lot of background in child development.” Said background seems to fail her, however, when little Hunter, dressed in his tiny tuxedo, decides to perform a perfect toddler meltdown, complete with flailing limbs and piercing screams.

Then there is the story of a seven-year-old girl with a self-chosen stage name—“Tootsie”—which she demands her parents use, for the duration of the pageant, when speaking to her. Confusing things further is the fact that “Tootsie” refers to herself by her given name—Taylor—in the third person: “Taylor is bored.” Her mother is left to grin sheepishly and shrug.

Now comes Teri, and she’s a dynamo. Mother of five-year-old Stephanie, Teri opines breathlessly that “life in general is about presentation. Pre-sen-ta-tion! If you have it, you’ll succeed at whatever you do.” I’m not completely sure, but I think Teri has just recommended going through life as a fake.

LAST AUGUST I attended a children’s beauty pageant in Texas. My goal was to compare what I had seen on television with what I would see in person. The event was held in a hotel ballroom over a two-day period. The contest covered pageant wear (dresses), talent, and

swimsuits. The average number of adults I saw in the ballroom at any one time was about 60.

My overall impression was that the event was a bit frayed. The stage was shabby, and a boom box was used whenever contestants needed music. However, the atmosphere seemed fairly light-hearted, with little girls running around, having a good time.

Other things were noteworthy when seen in person. Close up, a \$3,000 dress looks like a \$50 dress. Some mothers made their daughters’ dresses or bought them on eBay. No competitors wore flip-flops. Bad tanning jobs made girls look orange from head to foot, sort of like little aliens.

I cruised the ballroom, looking for moms to talk to. Everyone I approached was friendly and forthcoming, and I told them all I was considering an article on children’s pageants. I immediately found Tara and her mother, Megan. At that moment, Tara had a foot-long, stick-shaped thing in her mouth. I asked Megan about that. “Oh, it’s a kind of fruit-flavored sugar. It keeps the girls [here Megan mimed quotation marks] ‘up’ between competitions.” Megan told me she and Tara go to two events a month and travel throughout the South. They started when Tara was a year old. Megan calls it their “girl time.”

I also talked to Teri, the dynamo. “What,” I asked, “do you as a mother get from these pageants?”

“Oh, I get to see Stephanie have fun! That’s what it’s all about, my daughter. It’s all for Stephi!” She went on to tell me, with great animation, that to be the best, you have to work at it. That Tiger Woods practices every single day. That she always tells Stephi you can’t win without working, working, working. I think there was more, but I was too exhausted to listen.

Teri would come to be a big part of the pageant for me. It turned out there

was a misses event, which was a competition for mothers of pageant children. It consisted of both an evening gown and a swimsuit competition. I knew nothing of this until I looked toward the stage and saw several mothers, including Teri, who was wearing a cut-to-there white gown. She took the stage and modeled perfectly: smile, turn, pivot, flex the knee, lift the heel, smile-smile-smile.

If I was surprised by the dress, I was dumbfounded by the bikini. Teri's was electric blue and very small. (In an unintentional bit of hilarity, the female MC announced, "The moms will be showcasing their swimsuits.") All I could think as I watched was *Mommy's onstage in her undies: Is Stephi having fun?* What part of this was "all for her"?

Teri won the misses competition—no surprise there. She surely outworked everyone else. (Somewhere Tiger Woods was smiling.) Her award was a very large, very ugly trophy and a very large, very

cheesy crown. Stephi ran onstage to hug her mother, but pictures were being taken, and they were mom-only, so Teri sort of stiff-armed Stephi out of the way.

Talk of money was in the air in Texas, both about the cost of pageants and about the possible winnings. The top prize in the Texas pageant was \$2,000. This amount thrilled parents, which I found odd, since it is a pittance compared with the overall cost of pageant life. Pageant expenses include outfits and accessories, hairpieces, modeling coaches, dance lessons, makeup professionals, hair stylists, professional photography, travel and lodging, entry fees, and, eventually, flippers. One TV mother said she spends \$60,000 per year on pageants. Then she proudly revealed that her daughter had so far this year won \$16,000, which was "going into her college fund."

What was most interesting to me about the pageant I attended was the dynamic between pageant children and

their mothers. There is no mistaking that in most cases pageants are for mothers. I did see some moms and daughters who appeared to have normal—if that is the word—relationships. And there were a couple of hard-faced mothers who vibrated disapproval whenever their daughters made mistakes. This led me to ask the pageant director about the prevalence in the pageant world of "mean pageant moms." She answered—a bit too quickly—that such mothers are extremely rare, almost never a problem. That there are over 25,000 pageants nationally each year (according to the International Pageant Association) made her response, on its face, less than credible.

But mainly what I saw in Texas were mothers who had the kind of misplaced emotional investment in these pageants that allowed their spoiled daughters room to blackmail and manipulate them, to call them names and disobey, to engage in all forms of obnoxious behavior. The whole

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enterprise is like a brat factory.

Critics of children's beauty pageants almost always point to the makeup, the outfits, and the belief that children are being victimized. If little girls are seen as being exploited, it is usually from this perspective.

I saw maybe 25 little girls in Texas, and none looked scandalously done up to me. However, I did see many who were tired and worn out and pushed past the limit in a day that went from 6 A.M. to 10 P.M. One four-year-old could not be awakened to accept her award, and some little girls fell asleep on two banquet chairs shoved together.

If some of these girls were victims, it was about more than makeup and big hair. The parent-child relationship was being turned on its head. Many of these little girls were being bribed by their mothers with anything that worked, in-

cluding puppies. (I saw two of those deals go down in Texas.) These children are not so much sexualized as objectified. As a television mother said of her three-year-old, "She's my own little dress-up doll." And these little girls understand their role. They go onstage, flip on a switch, go offstage, flip off a switch. Many girls seem not even to care about the trophies and sashes and crowns they win. They are more interested in the balloons and the goodie bags, which are loaded with (guess what?) sugar treats.

Without fail, every mother I talked to said that the minute her daughter no longer wants to do pageants, it's over. Really? After four or six or ten years of this, what will these women do with their weekends? How will they get a life? What will they do with the many trophies and crowns they have chosen to display in the living room, rather than their daughter's room?

What will they do about rude daughters who ignore them?

The question I took from the Texas pageant was: What is a mother willing to sacrifice, as a mother, to get what she wants through her daughter? A better question might be, Is there anything she is not willing to sacrifice? As one mother said, in what was supposed to sound like a joke but didn't, "I am my daughter's slave." Slave-mothers suggest something more critical than expensive dresses and glitter cream. They suggest a relationship in which little girls disrespect their mothers because they can, and mothers tolerate disrespect because they think they have to. And that leaves a final question: How many puppies can you give a kid?

Janet Scott Barlow is the author of
The Nonpatriotic President: A
Survey of the Clinton Years.



flickr user ceandjen

Remaking Conservatism

by John M. Vella

CHARLES KESLER, in an otherwise unremarkable essay in the *Claremont Review of Books* (Summer 2009), argues that an effective response to the challenges of modern liberalism requires a revolution within conservatism. He says a reformation on the right must involve a “return to the principles of the Declaration of Independence and Constitution” as interpreted by President Lincoln. Like all good West Coast Straussians, Kesler follows his mentor Harry Jaffa, who boldly defied the conservative consensus that regarded Abraham Lincoln not as a conservative icon but as a consolidator of federal power at the expense of state sovereignty. Conservative calls to resist the federal encroachment on states’ rights with threats of secession are “boneheaded” because they are “un-Lincolnian.” Kesler predictably discourages invoking the Tenth Amendment because it was used to resist civil-rights legislation in the 1950’s and afterward. His preference for the preamble of the Declaration of Independence over the supposedly tainted Tenth Amendment is further evidenced by his criticism of Southern conservatives who defend a “radical view of states’ rights” against “human or natural rights.” Furthermore, he reprimands Anglo-American conservatives who try to “expunge all abstract doctrines of equality and revolution from our political life.” Ultimately, writes Kesler, “American conservatism stands or falls . . . by its allegiance to the American Revolution and Founding.” In other words, the meaning given to America’s founding by Anglo-American conservatives is false because it does not conform to Lincoln’s and Jaffa’s interpretation.

The Straussian challenge to Anglo-

American conservatism has been ongoing for decades and in recent years has largely succeeded in convincing establishment Republicans to abandon conservative principles in exchange for promised electoral victories. A notable example of Kesler’s effort to remake the right by discrediting Anglo-American conservatism is the extraordinary speech he delivered in 1998 at the American Enterprise Institute, a speech that later appeared in *National Review* under the title “All American? Conservatism Needs to Become More Thoroughly American.” His words reflect the views of many Straussians and neoconservatives who occupy positions of prominence in Washington think tanks and in the mainstream conservative media. (We see evidence of this meeting of the minds in a 1997 *Wall Street Journal* essay by William Kristol and David Brooks, who asserted that what was “missing from today’s American conservatism is America.”) In the *National Review* article, Kesler accused such traditional conservatives as Russell Kirk of harming the Republican Party by promoting a brand of conservatism that is insufficiently American and thus alienates the electorate. Kirk’s views—presumably disseminated widely enough to influence national elections—“clash with the principles of the American Founding” because the founders he most admired were those who reflected the principles of Edmund Burke. However, as Kesler would have it, Kirk’s view “was never peculiarly American” because even John Adams and the other founders whom he preferred over Jefferson or Hamilton or Washington were not, it turns out, the Burkean Anglo-American conservatives he made them out to be. After all, writes Kesler, Adams favored re-

publican government, and the only good things about the British constitution are its republican elements, which are based presumably on the newly discovered “unalienable or natural rights of man” championed by French philosophers.

Readers conversant with the contents of Kirk’s *Conservative Mind*, from which much of the evidence for Kesler’s indictment is drawn, will find this portrayal of his views misleading. Kirk believed Hamilton was a monarchist—indeed an old Tory—but one who did not live up to the Anglo-American ideal. Adams, on the other hand, opposed the “hereditary magistracy” favored by Burke. Yet Kirk saw Adams as the proper heir to Burkean conservatism, so monarchy clearly was not an essential criterion for Kirk. Until the Revolution, the Founding Fathers were British citizens: They were not rejecting the British constitution but demanding the restoration and observance of their common-law rights as Englishmen. Thus, it is not surprising that the founders shared Burke’s admiration for the political institutions he—and they—inherited. History gives testimony to this truth. Jefferson records the views of that quintessential American, our first president, on the superiority of the British constitution: “Washington had not a firm confidence in the durability of our government. Washington was influenced by the belief that we must at length end in something like a British constitution.”

In *States’ Rights and the Union*, Forrest McDonald retells the story of a 1791 dinner party hosted by Jefferson at which Hamilton and Adams shared their views of the British political system. “Adams spoke glowingly of the British system,” writes McDonald, recording the Vice President’s words: “Purge that constitution of its corruption, and give to its popular branch equality of representation, and it would be the most perfect constitution ever devised by the wit of man.” Hamilton, on the other hand, favored

the British system just as it was, even with two hereditary branches. In other words, Hamilton tended to “clash” more with America’s founding principles—as defined by Kesler—than Adams did: “Purge it of corruption,” Hamilton remarked,

and give to its popular branch equality of representation, and it would become an impracticable government: as it stands at present, with all its supposed defects, it is the most perfect government which ever existed.

In *Federalist* 47, Madison records the opinion of Montesquieu: “this great political critic appears to have viewed the constitution of England as the standard, or to use his own expression, as the mirror of political liberty.” Why write this? To demonstrate the extent to which the proposed American Constitution resembled the British ideal.

The kind of leveling or equality championed by the French Jacobins was fiercely rejected by most members of the founding generation, John Adams included. The true natural rights that Burke favored are listed by Kirk: “Equality in the sight of God, equality before the law, security in what is one’s own, participation in the common activities and consolations of society . . .” This view of rights is akin to that of Adams, who, like Burke, attacked the excesses of abstract thinking that led to the violence characteristic of the French Revolution. In his *Defense of the Constitutions*, Adams attacked the democratic absolutist theories of Turgot and Rousseau, and in *Discourses on Davila*, he challenged the ideas of human and institutional perfectibility advanced by Condorcet:

But to teach that all men are born with equal powers and faculties, to equal influence in society, to equal property and advantages

through life, is as gross a fraud, as glaring an imposition on the credulity of the people, as ever was practiced by monks, by Druids, by Brahmins, by priests of the immortal Lama, or by the self-styled philosophers of the French Revolution.

To Adams, equality meant that all men were independent, but

a physical inequality, an intellectual inequality, of the most serious kind, is established unchangeably by the Author of nature; and society has a right to establish any other inequalities it may judge necessary for its good.

When “freedom” and “equality” become the slogans of revolutionary extremists who impose them by force, sweeping away long-established liberties, customs, and private associations and institutions, the orderly and peaceful development of civilized society is necessarily disrupted. History has repeatedly demonstrated what can happen when abstract ideology is given free rein. Anglo-American conservatives learned this from the French Revolution, and their beliefs were confirmed by observing the devastation of totalitarian violence and oppression in the 20th century. Ideological extremism, not nihilism or moral relativism, is the ever-present danger. Yet in a 2005 *National Review* article, Kesler asks American conservatives to thank Leo Strauss, a European émigré, for leading “a philosophical revival of the arguments for natural rights and against relativism and nihilism.” Anglo-American conservatives know something many students of Strauss do not: To advance a philosophy of abstract rights, as did the Jacobins of old, without due consideration for the inherited customs and mores of a people, is to make relativism and nihilism more likely. As Roger Scruton has observed,

ton has observed,

The effect of revolutionary ideology is to introduce a kind of incurable nihilism into the social order, to infect all public processes with the sense that they are without justification, and to be understood merely as the passing drift of power. It therefore acts so as to negate the process of politics—the process which has the conciliation of rival interests as its meaning and its goal. By proclaiming a purely abstract “Liberty,” the Revolution facilitated the destruction of the qualified and partial liberties which come through the work of compromise. By offering abstract Right, it legitimized the destruction of law, and so made the concrete rights of citizenship impossible to claim.

Demands for abstract rights meant to bring about utopian society do not allow for political compromise but instead frequently lead to violence against those who seek to protect inherited liberties and favor gradual change. According to Kesler, however, tradition does not provide a way to determine right from wrong. What is required is “a moral standard that has a validity or goodness independent of the tradition: it requires an abstract principle.” Of course, this means that prejudice, a nonrational and partially intuitive means by which human beings make moral judgments, and prescription, customary rights that originate from the conventions of successive generations, are inadequate. What is needed are the intellectual abstractions of gnostic philosophers whose moral insights are not informed by human experience but by some divine illumination. The charge of historicism made against Burke by Strauss in *Natural Right and History* has been repeated by two generations of Straussians,

even though that charge was discredited not long after it was uttered.

In his defense of the British constitution, Burke does not deny that it was guided by a transcendent moral order, nor does he intend it to be self-justifying. It is precisely because the constitution is part of the moral order that no one can claim the right to relieve himself of its obligations by replacing it with something new. Burke does not deny the existence of natural rights. The rights embodied in the British constitution do not come from abstract theories but from ancient custom and historic legal codes. Burke's alternative moral argument is intended to prevent the political extremism that characterized the French Revolution.

Kirk never denied that the British political tradition contained principles that are "in accordance with human nature." Kesler appears to believe that Kirk saw no good in a constitution built upon an accurate understanding of human nature because Burke thought prescription was the "sole authority" of the British constitution. And prescription is assumed to be an arbitrary force detached from the nature of man and from providence. However, Kirk addresses this misperception in *The Conservative Mind*, where he tells us why Burke thought knowledge of history was insufficient for the statesman and philosopher:

[T]hey must know nature. Burke's "nature" is human nature, the springs of conduct common to civilized peoples. . . . Knowing history and nature, a man may humbly aspire to apprehend Providential dispensations.

What Burke opposed was the ideology of natural rights that had no basis in real life, the brainchild of ivory-tower intellectuals who sought to impose their impious and hubristic schemes of social progress without weighing the unintended and

perhaps devastating consequences. Kesler does not find this warning persuasive, despite the testimony of historical precedent. He believes Strauss and his students inspired the modern conservative movement to "return to the natural-rights doctrines of the American Founders," in part by portraying "big government as an insult to our rights" and "an offense against our equality." The "intelligent way" to defeat big-government liberalism is on the basis of "rights" and "equality." Yet it was precisely on these grounds that federal power expanded beyond the limits established by our Founding Fathers.

Kesler's interpretation of the founding is flawed because his ideological presuppositions prevent him from considering evidence that could challenge the validity of his argument. Given Kesler's wildly inaccurate reading of *The Conservative*

Mind, no one should be surprised by his failure to comprehend the complex character of the intellectual debate conducted by the founding generation over the nature of our government. While his lack of historical comprehension can be explained by his limited study of American history, there is no excuse for his ignorance of the extensive scholarship in his own discipline establishing Burke as a natural-law thinker. However, despite all the inaccuracies they contain, Kesler's polemical writings do offer at least one valuable insight: They confirm beyond any doubt what Anglo-American conservatives have said about the dangers of ideological thinking.

John M. Vella was, from 1995 to 2008, the managing editor of *Modern Age: A Quarterly Review*.



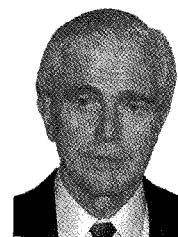
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Up in the Air

Produced and distributed by Paramount Pictures ♦
 Directed by Jason Reitman ♦ Screenplay by
 Sheldon Turner, adapting Walter Kirn's novel

The Road

Produced and distributed by Dimension Films ♦
 Directed by John Hillcoat ♦
 Screenplay by Joe Penhall, adapting
 Cormac McCarthy's novel



In Flight

GEORGE CLOONEY, well-groomed and exceedingly fit at 49, seems perfect as Ryan Bingham, the conscienceless protagonist of *Up in the Air*. He's a man who disposes of people for both profit and recreation. By day he is a frequent-flying hatchet man or, to use the preferred term in America's ever-expanding dictionary of euphemisms, "transition counselor." He flies wherever needed 320 days a year to fire people whose bosses would rather not swing the ax themselves. After hours, he philanders as ruthlessly as he terminates. Once his job is done and he's had his fun, he moves on to make his next connection, whether it's a flight or another cutie. All the while, whether on land or in the ether, he floats contentedly on a cloud of well-nurtured self-congratulation.

Bingham is good at his job because he has fully embraced the virtues of the transience he urges on his "clients." So pleased with his modern no-strings life, he has even packaged it for a spin-off from his primary vocation. He gives inspirational lectures to other peripatetic businesspeople. Bingham is best known for an address entitled, "How Much Does Your Life Weigh?" He begins this spiel by inviting his listeners to fill their backpacks—clothing, cars, homes, friends, siblings, spouses. "Feel the weight of that bag," he urges them. "Make no mistake; your relationships are the heaviest components in your life. Some animals were meant to carry each other, over a lifetime—star-crossed lovers, monogamous swans." Pausing for effect, he concludes, "We are not swans. We are sharks." The trick to living well, Bingham assures his brave Brooks Brothers brothers and sis-

ters, is to keep moving. "The slower we move, the faster we die."

As we follow Bingham's typical day, we see just how apt the shark image is. He cruises corporate cubicles, a predatory smile baring his perfect teeth. And while we listen to him smooth-talk one and all, we can also hear the growl beneath his purr. Bingham has perfected a murderously deft technique that might be called empathetic cool. It is one part commiseration to three parts dry ice. When one of his terminatees (that invaluable character actor J.K. Simmons) gruffly refuses to roll over for Bingham, the terminator knows exactly what to say. Bob the firee wants to know just what he's supposed to say to his children. His face eloquent with understanding, Bingham leans a bit closer to Bob and asks how much the firm paid him to give up his dreams 25 years ago. Bob has to admit that, yes, he did sell out, and in fact he did so over and over as his salary increased annually. Bingham smiles understandingly. He then asks Bob to imagine how much his children will admire him for leaving the corporation and following those neglected dreams. Soon Bob is thanking Ryan for the favor he's doing him.

Of course, Bingham doesn't care what happens to Bob or any of the people he axes. A young colleague asks if he follows up to see how these people fare. "No," he replies decisively. "Nothing good would come of that." Spoken like the consummate professional he clearly is.

But then Bingham's firm brings in Natalie (Anna Kendrick), a recent Cornell graduate, who has a cost-saving plan that threatens to burden his own backpack insupportably. She wants the firm to go "glocal." With teleconferencing, she points out, you can fire people globally while never leaving the locale of your own cubicle. Bingham is dismayed, for, like Bob, he has a dream. He's been striving to compile ten million frequent-flyer miles on his favorite airline and become the eighth member of a privileged club entitled to an endless stream of upgrades and free car rentals. If Natalie succeeds in grounding him, his dream will go down in flames.

Meanwhile, Alex (Vera Farmiga), his latest babe, is offering him pleasant diversion. A motel-lounge pick-up, she brags prettily that she is flexible enough to do it in the rest rooms of commuter airplanes. As her masculine name and wanton behavior suggest, she just may be Bingham's true soulless mate. Still, the ten-million-mile man is hard to land. When Alex detects signs that Bingham may be making ready to book another connection, she chides him: "I'm the woman you don't have to worry about. Think of me as yourself, only with a vagina." Could a man ask for more?

Based on Walter Kirn's novel of the same title, *Up in the Air* has been directed by Jason Reitman as a rueful satire on what passes for sophistication among our business class. It's an entertaining enough

film but hardly the best of the year, as a surprising number of commentators have hailed it. Reitman fails to bring off the novel's central conceit: the rootless anomie bred by the high-flying corporate lifestyle. For one thing, his leading man seems too nice to be the lone killer shark he purports to be. Also, Reitman willfully misleads us. We are carefully set up to expect a fairly conventional resolution, and then in the last few minutes everything is turned on its ear. I'm all for surprise endings, but they shouldn't be arrived at by means of preposterously rigged characterization and motive. Perhaps Reitman followed Ryan's advice too closely and unburdened his backpack of narrative logic.

AT THE OTHER END of the emotional scale, there's John Hillcoat's adaptation of Cormac McCarthy's apocalyptic novel, *The Road*, a bleak vision of the near future. In the aftermath of some unspecified worldwide catastrophe, personal loyalty and self-sacrifice stand—just barely—as the only virtues left in a blasted landscape.

Those who know McCarthy's novel will be impressed but, perhaps, also disheartened by Hillcoat's reverential treatment of his source. Like the book, the film follows the journey of a man and his young son as they walk through a pitiless environment stripped of all vegetable and animal life except for a remnant of brutalized humanity. (McCarthy never says what they have survived or how.) Of this remnant, a significant portion have reverted to the war of all against all. Tribal bands maraud the land in pursuit of food, preferably young children and their mothers. Since they do not have refrigeration, these cannibals store their human food live, amputating their victims a limb at a time for their meals and cauterizing the resulting stumps to keep the meat fresh for another repast.

Hillcoat has rendered the novel's desolate, despairing atmosphere quite well, and his leads, Viggo Mortensen (the

nameless man) and Kodi Smit-McPhee (his son), are utterly convincing and very moving. Mortensen is half-crazed in his absolute determination to defend his son, even if it means killing him before the cannibals catch him. For his part, Smit-McPhee fully renders the boy's nearly constant state of terror, interrupted only by his desire to help the very few non-threatening people they meet along their way. The father and son's mutual devotion in the midst of a nearly unimaginable nightmare makes this grim film bearable. But Hillcoat's decision to bring in Charlize Theron as the boy's mother seems to me a distracting mistake. In the novel, the boy asks about his mother from time to time, and the man dreams of her occasionally, but otherwise she's a poignant absence in their lives. By putting her into the film, Hillcoat calls attention to one of the novel's improbabilities. On the page, we can accept the wife's disappearance without questioning its plausibility. It is enough to know that she could not bear the horrible prospect facing her family and decided to remove herself before the inevitable horror ahead. Once introduced into the film, however, the woman forces us to wonder how she reached her moment of overwhelming despair, and Hillcoat doesn't dramatize this effectively.

The apparent inevitability that haunts the woman creates another problem for the film. In the novel, McCarthy writes as if everything is foregone. Consequently, there is not much room for narrative's traditional responsibility to resolve human struggles. Storytelling, with its inherent drive to get to what happens next and thereby the conclusion, is an art that makes us hopeful and human. But in *The Road* it often seems there is only the

road along which things happen, with no meaningful conclusion in sight. This is McCarthy's strategy, of course. He tells us for 300 pages that the end has arrived and there is nothing much else to say. His narrator seems stunned, delivering this message in deliberately flat, repetitive prose. His recitation of events in the dwindling lives of the novel's forlorn characters is just a matter of one misery after another. Hillcoat registers this very effectively, but on his nearly colorless screen it wears one down after a while—a short while, at that. And I don't think this is McCarthy's ultimate intention.

The novel more clearly than the film holds out one bare possibility of a continuing human narrative, and it lies with the son. "Sometimes," the father reveals, "I tell the boy old stories of courage and justice—difficult as they are to remember. All I know is the child is my warrant and if he is not the word of God, then God never spoke." His lingering faith gives him the courage to urge the boy on. "You have to keep carrying the fire," he tells him. When the boy asks what fire, he responds, "The fire inside you." It is this allegiance to the fire of paternal love that finally makes this a genuine narrative for all its seemingly bleak absurdity. Heroic storytelling has not succumbed to cannibalism after all.

The image of paternal fire also appears at the end of McCarthy's *No Country for Old Men*. In a dream, the protagonist finds himself being led into the next world by his dead father carrying a torch. This image seems to be McCarthy's warrant that love and dedication are still possible in a world populated by selfish frequent flyers compulsively in flight from traditional responsibilities. ♦

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THE STORY thus far: Not content with plunging the world's economy into the worst crisis since the 30's, the avaricious and reckless bankers have been saved from ruin—momentarily—by our taxes, yet they continue to treat us with breathtaking contempt. Far from feeling any remorse or humility, they pay themselves annual bonuses larger than what most people earn in their lifetime, and do so with an arrogance that beggars belief.

In a speech delivered last November in Texas, the sainted editor of this journal zeroed in on Goldman Sachs and its head honcho, Lloyd Blankfein. He is the bum who helped inflate and then profited from a bubble that burst and cost tens of millions of Americans their jobs, incomes, savings, and home equity. For his part, Blankfein has not only refused to apologize but, after repaying the company's initial \$10 billion bailout allotment, pledged \$500 million over five years to help 10,000 small businesses. It was a crumb thrown to the hungry for a public-relations exercise. A real contribution would be in the high billions and aimed directly at taxpayers.

But that is not the way of the banks. When America emerged from the Great Depression, a tightly regulated banking system was in effect. The first big wave of deregulation, under Ronald Reagan, led to the savings-and-loan crisis of the mid-1980's. Taxpayers ended up footing the bill to the tune of \$300 billion in today's money. Once liberated from regulation, bankers' greed went into overdrive. Wall Street Sammy Glicks invented new ways to screw the public and further enrich themselves. For example: A mortgage company would loan \$500,000 to a borrower who had no means to repay, then turn around and sell the loan to Wall Street investment houses. The latter would then resell it—for a tidy profit—to hedge funds as a bond. The hedges would then buy a form of insurance against the bond defaulting, called cred-

it-default swaps, and so on down the line. Eventually, the game was up, but by then the bankers, starting with Goldman Sachs, had enriched themselves beyond imagination.

WHEN THE YOU-KNOW-WHAT hit the fan, Uncle Sam, using your tax dollars, stepped in and wiped them clean. Then, after a few months the Blankfeins of this world went back to what they know best. The trick is called innovative banking. In reality, all the Goldman Sachs innovations are for one purpose only: to enrich themselves by ripping off the public. Which is easy to do, as Goldman Sachs executives sooner or later find themselves as heads of the Fed or the SEC, depending on how naive the yokel in the White House happens to be. Robert Rubin, dean of the Goldman Sachs Democrats, served as Bill Clinton's treasury secretary and was on the board of Citigroup, which pocketed a \$300 billion government handout after suffering humongous losses on subprime mortgage investments. Rubin made \$115 million for guiding Citigroup through the process of losing all that moolah. Instead of going to jail he resigned with honors and flew off into the sunset in his private jet.

Among the more disgusting people in a group that defies description as far as ugliness is concerned is Richard Fuld, the last CEO of Lehman Brothers. Fuld's ego had filled the once-respected house to beyond capacity, turning it into a fire

hazard of pride and greed. Fuld was a bully and was known to threaten to beat up people. Actually, he's a very homely, simian-looking Jew who couldn't punch his way out of a nursery, but such are the joys of Wall Street legends. At his peak at Lehman Brothers, Fuld was the biggest lender on earth, without having anywhere near the capital on hand to protect the house if the loans went bad. He retired with a fortune of upward of a half a billion dollars, five houses, and an art collection that he immediately transferred to his wife's name in case of lawsuits.

Which brings me to Stevie Cohen, as this particular slob is known among the hedgies. Cohen is worth six billion dollars, which he made during the late 90's and up to the crash. He is a Wall Street trader and hedge-fund manager. His company is based in Connecticut and goes by the name SAC Capital. I met him before he made it and thought him shady, to say the least. Just before Christmas, the *New York Post* led with the following headline: "Hedge' honcho a 'thief.'" Cohen has been accused by his ex-wife of insider trading and is being investigated. As of this writing, there is not much more I can say except that he had already been investigated for insider trading.

Greenspan, Cohen, Blankfein, Rubin, Fuld—the list goes on. If ever you hear of some Anglo-Saxon name taking over Wall Street, make sure to plunge in. But don't hold your breath. ♦



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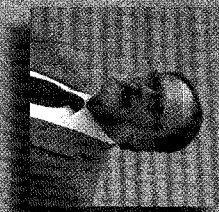
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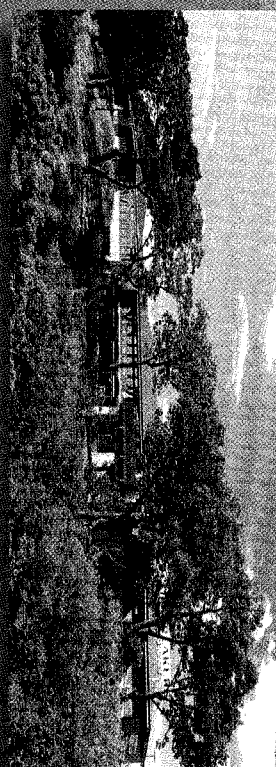
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